

The
HIGH

SCHOOL

THESPIAN



VOL. XI, No. 7

A National Publication Devoted to Dramatics in the Secondary Schools

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MAY, 1940



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The High School Thespian will welcome at any time articles, news items, pictures, or any other material of interest in the field of high school dramatics. Manuscripts and photographs submitted for publication must be accompanied by stamped, self-addressed envelope. Not responsible for unsolicited materials.

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MAY, 1940

THE HIGH SCHOOL THESPIAN

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1, 2, 3, 4. Scenes from the production of *PRIDE AND PREJUDICE* at Watertown, South Dakota, Senior High School (Thespian Troupe No. 330). Directed by Miss Florence M. Bruhn. 5. Betty Ebert as Terry in *YOUNG APRIL* as staged by Mr. Howard H. Palmer at San Bernardino, Calif., Senior High School (Thespian Troupe No. 148). 6. Members of the Heights Players of Cleveland, Ohio, Heights High School (Thespian Troupe No. 410) in *IF I WERE A KING*. Directed by Dr. Dina Rees Evans. 7. Scene from *JUNE MAD* as given by Thespians of Troupe No. 354 of Penn High School, Greenville, Pa. Mrs. Nora Lynch Kearns, director. 8. Mr. Edward Thomas, Thespian Troupe Sponsor, Central High School, Parkersburg, W. Va. 9. Scene from *SEVEN LITTLE REBELS* as produced by Miss Eleanor Yinger at Grand Ledge, Mich., High School (Troupe No. 356). 10. Scene from *YOUNG APRIL* at San Bernardino, Calif., Senior High School.



EDITORIAL—WE SAY



OUR AIM: "To create a Spirit of Active and Intelligent Interest in Dramatics Among Boys and Girls of our Secondary Schools."

WE made it known last fall that this department would appear only when we had something really important to say, and that otherwise this page would be used to help relieve the ever-present need for more space. It has been no easy matter to abide by our fall *pronunciamento*, but now that the season is about to close we are glad that we did not vary from our original intentions.

There were the occasions, for example, when we wanted to editorialize the fact that our circulation has grown handsomely during the season; we wanted to say something about our subscriptions from foreign lands; we thought we should urge our readers to patronize our generous advertisers. But after thinking the matter through, we concluded that circulation is no subject for editorials, even though it is important to us. And who really cares that the great Poohbah of Zanzibar is a subscriber? As for our readers patronizing our advertisers, we observed long ago that if we have the circulation, the matter will take care of itself. (Incidentally, the Audit Bureau of Circulation has exactly the same idea on that point.)

Other subjects, far more important in our estimation, were likewise passed up. We wanted to say something about the vast amount of work that lies ahead before **dramatics becomes a part of the educational process in all our schools**; we wanted to talk about the need for clarification of fundamental objectives and for research in the social justifications for the teaching of Dramatics. We wanted to protest the failure of so many of our colleges and universities to offer even so much as the bare essentials of instruction in the teaching and supervision of dramatics to the young men and women who will be called upon to direct this activity in the high schools. We wanted to protest the professional inadequacy and lethargy of some of those in our higher schools of learning who claim to be teaching how to teach dramatics, with the result that many of their pupils acquire the same academic diseases. We wanted to point out the dangers inherent in the practices of those directors and teachers of dramatics whose efforts are devoted almost entirely to glorifying themselves at the expense of their students, with the result that when they leave—and many of them leave in a hurry—nothing of a permanent nature is left to advance dramatics in the school and community. We wanted to deplore the efforts of some directors—and some of them mean well—who consciously or unconsciously pattern their dramatics program after Broadway,

forgetting that their fundamental business is to develop their boys and girls.

And there were the occasions when we wanted to praise those teachers and directors, and there are many of them, who do such excellent work in the teaching of dramatics, photoplay and radio appreciation, for the good of the boys and girls in their classrooms and for the enlightenment of their school superiors, boards of education, and townspeople. We wanted to compliment those hard-working directors who, with little money, little encouragement, and few facilities, accomplish all that their predecessors said could not be done. We wanted to extend a word of encouragement to those teachers who have to fight for everything they need to promote their work—even for the funds that they have rightfully earned. We wanted to congratulate those teachers and directors who make it their business to learn all they can about dramatics so they can do justice to the work suddenly thrust upon them because they had a vacant period or because no one else was available to act as sponsor for the dramatics club or direct the class plays. And we also wanted to express our appreciation to a great many principals and superintendents, and boards of education, who know and understand the value of dramatics and the entire speech program and who do all within their power to encourage and develop this type of work in their schools.

The curtain will soon come down on another season, and this is our last issue for this year. We feel we are entitled to this page—our last opportunity of the season—to express ourselves editorially. And our first duty is to gratefully acknowledge the interest, encouragement, loyalty, and cooperation of our readers, our advertisers, and our editorial staff. And we particularly want to thank our Thespian Troupe Sponsors and students to whom most of the credit goes for whatever success we have enjoyed this season. Without the generous help of these loyal friends, our own efforts would be feeble indeed.

Stay Away From Broadway!

THE tragedies that befall many of our young people who wander to New York City in search of fame and fortune on the stage are known to many. But there are those, some of whom are teachers, who are not acquainted with the facts. A carelessly thrown compliment, an extravagant story written by some amateur drama critic for the local paper, a word of praise by some admiring relative, is often excuse enough to cause a boy or girl to dream of Broadway glory. "The star role," "brilliant performance," "just like a professional," "his-

trionic honors," "perfect portrayal," "young Katharine Cornell," "polished actress," are phrases that have brought sorrow and defeat to many young people. The teacher who is instrumental in bringing a tragedy of this nature into the life of any one of her pupils is not only guilty of a serious crime, but is also in need of renewing her acquaintance with the objectives of the educational theatre.

The next several weeks will see thousands of boys and girls graduated from our high schools. We earnestly hope that not one of these young graduates will leave school with the dangerous notion that his or her next stop is Broadway. If there is one such student, somewhere in America there is a teacher who has not done her job well. The article by Beatrice Morosco which appears in this issue is particularly pertinent at this time of the season. We suggest that it be made the basis for a full discussion period before dramatics activities come to a close.

Stay away from Broadway! Over twenty thousand actors and actresses are looking for work. During the most prosperous seasons only two or three thousand find employment on the stage. If you feel that you have dramatic talent, enroll in some reliable private drama school or in one of our colleges or universities where you can get the training you need and where you can find out what you really can do. Some of these schools are listed in this publication. A postal card to any one of those in which you are interested will bring you a catalog and such other information you may wish.

Closing the Season

How will your dramatic season end this spring? Will it end, as happens in some schools, unimpressively, with neither you nor your students caring much how it will end? Or are you going to bring the curtain down with an impressive banquet and celebration, calling attention to all that you have accomplished during the year?

For your own professional self-respect, as well as for the best interests of dramatics in general, we hope that you will end the year impressively, dramatically, energetically. A banquet, attended by active and alumni students, community drama leaders, members of the Board of Education, and school officials, is your ideal opportunity to boost the cause of dramatics in your school. That, fellow teachers and directors, is the way in which the Athletics, Music, and other school departments in many schools close their year's program.

Here are a few suggestions. Schedule your banquet so that it will not conflict with Commencement activities. Get your dramatics students busy at once making plans for your banquet, and issue invitations to those you want present on that important occasion. If your school is a member of the National Thespian Society, use the color scheme of blue and gold and arrange your tables in the form of the letter "T", with speakers seated at the center table at the head of the "T."

Open the festivities with the singing of the school song. Your Troupe President or President of the Dramatics Club may act as Master of Ceremonies.

Plan an appropriate program for immediately after the banquet. Invite school officials to speak. You may hold your spring Thespian initiation at this time. Or perhaps you want to present a one-act play. Follow that course of action which seems best, but please plan something. Little can be said of the director who lets her program collapse the moment her last play of the year is given.

Of course, if you held your banquet earlier in the year, some other activity should be planned. This may be a theatre party, an outdoor celebration of some kind, a trip to some nearby school production, or a visit to a local theatre.

BROADWAY AT A GLANCE

by MARGARET WENTWORTH

THIS poor season has gone on its way mowing down plays with which distinguished names were connected. Just for the record, I mention them.

Failures on Broadway

Ruth Chatterton returned from Hollywood after long absence to play the lead in *Leave Her to Heaven*, by John van Druten, and could not save the play. Dorothy Thompson, perhaps our best-known woman columnist, wrote *Another Sun*, about refugee problems which fared even worse. The Group brought out Odets' new play, *Night Music*, with high hopes and a fine cast and it lasted less than three weeks. And now there seems to be a question about the longevity of *A Passenger to Bali*, with Walter Huston. I don't know why producers cast Huston as a villain; his genial, equable temperament seems to show right through the blackest grease paint. Here he is supposed to be a sinister dictator seeking some place for his evil schemes and the audience resents it when one of the "good" characters shoots him!

There has been no good murder mystery yet this season and the new one, *Goodbye in the Night*, is only fair though produced by George Abbott. Perhaps one reason for its non-success is that the murderer is a lunatic and that idea is horrible.

The Weak Link

The Weak Link is a play about crime of a type I myself thoroughly enjoy. A timid soul falls into the hands of five gangsters who are planning a payroll robbery and furnishes them a plan by which it may be safely done. Then he avails himself of the time gained to devise means of escape for himself and his girl, whom they have also trapped, and succeeds by sheer brain pitted against armed brute force. This would be a delightful high school play, having plenty of thrills and humor and wholly unobjectionable. Except that probably the girls would object to its giving them no chance; there is but one girl's part.

The Fifth Column

The only play of major stature produced in this time is Ernest Hemingway's *The Fifth Column*. The Romans called spies and informers the fifth column of their army and this drama deals with an American reporter who has entered into counter-espionage work in the last stages of the Spanish Civil War. Most of the Americans who fought there, like Mr. Hemingway and Vincent Sheean, were passionately convinced that the Loyalists were fighting for democracy and Mr.

Hemingway hews to the line of his thesis.

In view of the lost cause, the larger picture that emerges is that in war, especially in spying, a man sacrifices more than his life—his own best instincts of chivalry, humanity, decency. The love affair between the young newspaper man and an American girl who has come to Spain to search for her brother does not blend too well with the larger theme; it is said that, when the play was tried out on the road, Mr. Hemingway became tired of working on it and a man of theatre experience was called in. We cannot know just what he did and no doubt he may have made it theatrically more effective; but the result is patchy.

But the Guild has cast and directed it so that it emerges a stirring drama. Franchot Tone plays the hero and here is one actor, at least, who has returned from Hollywood with his work deepened and strengthened. Katherine Locke has a passive part but serves rather as a symbol of womanliness than as a person. Lee J. Cobb, a Group-trained actor, does splendid work as Max, the German revolutionary who keeps Tone from choosing the easiest way out. It is one of those plays which would read well and furnish endless material for discussion.

Reunion in New York

The group of refugee actors from Austria who put on *From Vienna* last summer are now doing *Reunion in New York*. The curtain is up when you enter the theatre and the stage is set as an unpretentious cafe. The members of the cast dance, sing and play, apparently with entire spontaneity till a siren screams and the scene goes black. When it opens again they are enroute to America. It is simple, friendly, often witty and very pleasant. Some eccentric dancers do amusing work and one of the skits, "English in Six Easy Lessons," is very apt and funny.

Revivals

April brings Maurice Evans back in *King Richard II*. *Mamba's Daughters* and *Liliom*. *A Case For Youth* is advertised by pointing out that the lead is to be played by a German actress named Ellen Schwanneke, who declined two invitations from Hitler to come to Berlin and who decided to leave Germany lest a third invitation might prove more urgent than pleasant.

Teatro Dei Piccoli?

The *Teatro Dei Piccoli* has not been here since 1932. This is run by an Italian family, the Podreccas, and consists of eight hundred life-sized marionettes, ma-

nipulated with surprising skill and giving scenes from plays and operas—thoroughly adult entertainment. I remember when I saw it eight years ago, I was particularly impressed with the airs and graces of a concert pianist, who spread his coat-tails, mopped his brows and then plunged into a bravura piece with great gusto, lifting himself bodily from the bench to come down on his smashing final chords.

Here and There

It will be almost May first when *Revelation* arrives. This is the new play by Robert Sherwood which is to bring the Lunts back to Broadway and to the Theatre Guild.

A third newspaper writer, Vincent Sheean, has written a play about the state of the world. His is called *An International Incident* and Guthrie McClintic is to sponsor it. Molly Picon, the Yiddish comedienne, is to undertake her first role in English in *Morning Star* and health insurance, the A. M. A. and socialized medicine will be treated in the Living Newspaper style in an opus called *Medicine Show*. Laurence Olivier expects to do *Romeo and Juliet* here in May.

The Dwight Deere Wiman musical, *Higher and Higher*, has been received with enthusiasm in Boston and will be here in April. And there is a crowd of possibilities, one of which is a new Saroyan play, *Love's Old Sweet Song*; a play called *Now I Owe You Nothing*, which seems inappropriate in this debt-ridden era; *Mr. and Mrs. North*, by Owen Davis; *Keep Off The Grass* (I think that's another musical) and Leonard Sillman's *New Faces Of 1940*.

At the World's Fair there will be a new *Aquacade* and *The American Jubilee*, but the Globe Theatre is not to reopen.

I realize that reading a menu does not satisfy appetite but in this number I have had nothing else to offer. If you keep your HIGH SCHOOL THESPIAN on file it may interest you to see in the fall whether or not all these came and, if they did, how many succeeded in staying the course.

Critics are often condemned for killing plays and I do feel that they are sometimes needlessly harsh; but weak-kneed producers who throw their hands in as soon as the critics frown are certainly guilty of contributory negligence. The critics poured scorn on *Hellz A Poppin*, and the revue flouted them and has gone merrily on its way ever since, playing to crowded houses.

In a quieter way Robert Henderson has won through to a modest success with *When We Are Married*, which recently passed its hundredth performance, which was the first current play to be televised entirely and which bids fair to slip along till summer; indeed, it may still be here in the fall after many more ambitious spectacles have gone.

Till fall then, my greetings to Thespians and THE THESPIAN.

THE HIGH SCHOOL THESPIAN



Act III from Thornton Wilder's play, *OUR TOWN*, as given by students of the Dramatics Department of the Newport News, Virginia, High School. Directed by Miss Dorothy M. Crane. (Thespian Troupe No. 122.)

Stay Away From Broadway!

by BEATRICE MOROSCO

Broadway, New York City

EVERY year hundreds of stage-struck girls from various parts of the country flock to Broadway like locusts overrunning a field of grain. The only difference is that locusts have something to nibble on, while the pastures of Broadway have been eaten down to the roots and are sadly in need of cross-fertilization.

So many glamorous stories have been written about the few favored mortals who used the stage as a stepping stone to screen success that the ambitious amateur deems it a simple matter to secure a part in a Broadway show where she can remain until a picture scout discovers her superior talents and dangles a Hollywood contract before her starry blue eyes.

The stories about the girls who don't make the grade are never told. They wouldn't make good reading. It's only when a lovely young actress like Peg Entwistle leaps to death from the top of the huge sign spelling the name of Hollywood, that the general public learns there are tragedies in the alluring profession of the theatre.

Even more tragic is the slow disintegration that eats away the heart of an actress as year after year rolls around but the picture scout has failed to put in an appearance. Her complexion begins to lose that rose petal look (which was her greatest charm) and her figure has grown convex in places where it used to be concave. She learns that it requires more acting ability to smile coquettishly when the agent mumbles "Not the type" than it does to play Lady Macbeth.

Making the weary rounds of the managers' and agents' offices only to be told "Nothing today" or "Come back after the holidays," bite into your very soul. Sometimes you vaguely wonder which holidays are meant; Christmas, Fourth of July or Yom Kippur. The supercilious

glances of the hard-boiled blonde at the switchboard, make you very self-conscious that your frock isn't as fresh looking as it was six months ago and her withering look of contempt makes you wonder if she knows you washed your lace collar in the bathroom sink. You find yourself suffering more and more from the self-inflicted wounds of super-sensitiveness.

Yet even this humiliation is nothing compared to a first rehearsal or audition—provided you are lucky enough to get that far. In the theatre one is ever the victim of the whims of his temperamental employers. I have seen girls so paralyzed from fear that they were speechless while others broke down weeping in the middle of a song. One authoress, with obvious sadistic tendencies, has each applicant sit on the stage in dead center under a "baby

spot" and asks her to read a few lines. As the house is half filled with other applicants, she has quite an audience and she proceeds to tell each actress just what she thinks is the matter with her. Which is always plenty!

Still another producer-author has discovered a most ingenious method of engaging a cast. This time HE is the one who sits on the center of the stage. Dramatically, he takes out a handkerchief and blindfolds himself.

"Now, stroll onto the stage, one at a time, without making a sound. I want to FEEL your presence . . . your magnetism. If your personality is strong enough I should be able to sense your vibrations at once," he explains in his pseudo English to the frightened actors, who at first thought they were about to enjoy a rollicking game of "Blind Man's Bluff!" Good troupers that they are, they bury their pride and stroll onto the stage, trying their darndest to keep their knees from knocking.

Of course, if you have money your chances are much easier to gain experience and you can buy your way into one of the summer theatres which play every barn from Westchester County to Maine. You'll be in good company too, for our finest actresses, including Helen Hayes, play the barn circuit. Your chances for being discovered by a prominent producer are excellent. But many an embryo Katharine Cornell comes to New York with so little of worldly goods that she can't even afford to pay the fifty dollars initiation fee to join the Actors' Equity Association, which is mandatory in securing a position. She learns that living at a decent hotel and wearing pretty clothes are necessary items. Moths are not the only creatures who live on clothes.

Granted you are young, talented and have money enough to burn, there are other obstacles. Unfortunately, there are not even enough jobs in the summer theatres to go around. Actresses fight for the opportunity to work for twenty-five dollars a week, twenty-one of which is frequently taken out for board and lodg-

Beatrice Morosco

Beatrice Morosco is the niece of Oliver Morosco, the producer of such well-known Broadway successes as *Peg o' My Heart*, *Bird of Paradise*, and *Abie's Irish Rose*. Three years ago she left the stage for radio work and free lance writing. "I was practically born into the theatre," she writes, "and I feel I know my subject well. We offer Miss Morosco's timely article with the hope that her advice is taken to heart by those young people, boys as well as girls, to whom Broadway and Success are synonymous terms. And we think, too, that her story is profitable reading for those teachers who, without even realizing it perhaps, put into the heads of some of their prize students the cruel thought that Broadway awaits them with open arms.—Editor."



Scene from Blandford Jennings' production of *BERKELEY SQUARE* at the Clayton, Missouri, High School. (Thespian Troupe No. 322.)

ing. There is no place for an amateur to learn her apprenticeship. And don't think for a minute that you can suddenly burst forth in full bloom in the theatre any more than you could become a stenographer, doctor or lawyer without training.

Every year over 1500 amateurs join the thousands of experienced actors and actresses who are feverishly seeking employment. The law of supply and demand never balances in the theatre and every year hundreds of performers are left without work. Many seasoned actors work only a few weeks a year and spend the rest of the time vainly haunting the offices, clinging like barnacles to the profession which treats them so cruelly.

This season the field will be more glutted than ever due to the closing of the Federal Theatre. The New York City W. P. A. project produced dozens of dramatic plays, supplemented by revues, vaudeville units and circuses. True, there was a dearth of young chorus girls and these had to be "requisitioned" from outside ranks but for all other parts there were vast numbers from which to make a selection. Many a headliner graced their boards and actresses, still young and pretty, were grateful for the opportunity to work for less than \$25 a week. Thousands of these actors throughout the country will swell the ranks to an alarming degree.

It was a different story up to ten years ago. There were often more than thirty plays running concurrently on Broadway. Today it's considered marvelous if there are more than ten. Road shows used to blossom all over the country like dandelions, and stock companies were as plentiful as crows in Oklahoma.

Among the many aspirants I chanced to meet at the various theatrical offices in the mad quest for work, fame smiled on only three; Jeanette MacDonald, who was modelling in a dress house and could only look for work during her lunch hour; Joan Blondell, who went into ecstasies when she finally landed a role in *Trial of Mary Dugan*, and Wallace Ford who was

trying to live down the stigma of having played the title role in *Abie's Irish Rose*.

When the theatre went sour in 1929 there was a furious scramble to seek other means of employment. The market crash, talking pictures and radio have all been blamed as contributing factors to the decline of the drama. Showfolk scurried to California in droves until the picture colony was teeming with talent. Actresses with established reputations were welcomed with open arms but the girl who was not so well known was as popular as a boil on the neck. The young amateur who was just starting her career had little more difficulty than on Broadway, and strangely enough, if an actress were old enough (and clever enough) to play character comedy roles, she could write her own ticket. But there was no place for the unknown girl in her late twenties or thirties to crash Hollywood. Wisely, she sought other less crowded fields of endeavor.

It is a difficult task for an actress who has spent several years in the theatre to suddenly be forced to seek other employment. Her very training unfits her for most professions. Just suppose all the nurses or school teachers were thrown out of their jobs practically over night, can you imagine the turmoil? But actresses are a versatile tribe. When they read the handwriting on the wall they swarmed like eels after a thunderstorm to every conceivable trade. There's not a department store in New York which can't boast about ex-actresses as sales-ladies, stylists and buyers; while a few of the more shapely sisters went in for modeling.

The ushers at Loew's Ziegfeld Theatre are beautiful ex-show girls who used to appear on the other side of the footlights. The beautician, stenographer and cashier all join in the chorus, "You know I used to be in show business myself." Gabrielle Gray, a former prima donna, is now a Burns' detective and finds life far more thrilling now than when she was on the stage.

Lovely Doraine Dupont keeps the wolf from her door by manufacturing chin

straps; Helen Gallagher and Janet of France run successful restaurants; Eunice Skelly, widow of the comedian, has made a fortune in beauty products, while Pearl Vanessi, famous for her peacock dance, owns her own perfume sachet business. Few people seem to know that Irene Hayes, Park Avenue's most popular florist, was once a Shubert chorus girl whose "two weeks' notice" was a kick up the ladder to success. June Justice leads the field of several dramatic actresses who run dramatic schools. Many were the ways in which these brave girls caught their second breath, but strangest of all . . . half a dozen girls actually took up embalming!

If these actresses, who are all attractive and talented, were forced to leave the theatre, what possible chance can a beginner have? Incidentally, wild horses couldn't drag these girls back to the caprices of the theatre again. They have learned that the theatre is the most cruel taskmaster in the world. For the frivolous young actress, who thought she could play around for a few years on the stage before getting married, there were bitter disappointments. She discovered that due to industrial conditions eligible husbands were scarcer than white crows.

Nobody could love the theatre more than I did. It was the consuming passion of my life and I had trained for it since early childhood. But an "artistic success" didn't pay my hotel bills while the drug-gist and the grocer weren't at all interested in my press notices. They were gross materialists who wanted cash for their wares. Three years ago I reluctantly left my beloved theatre. Or perhaps I should say it gave me up. Maybe you'll call me a quitter. But I don't think so. It would have been madness to continue. There were longer and longer waits between shows that lasted for shorter and shorter runs. But today I have a bank account and best of all, I have a circle of friends—something I was never able to enjoy when my evenings were devoted to the theatre.

I would be dishonest if I didn't tell you that I suffer so much from nostalgia when I attend the theatre that it has been over a year since I have seen a play. Perhaps later I will outgrow it. So like poor Penelope, unraveling at night all she had knit during the day, I ripped out ten years of endeavor. With ideals, but this time with no illusions, I started all over again in another craft.

But for you my dears, who are starting on the threshold of your careers, wouldn't it be wiser to select some business that isn't so crowded? In other fields the longer you serve the more valuable you become, but after a few short years the theatre throws you out like a discarded Christmas tree after the holidays.

Please don't wait until you are disillusioned, sick to the core of artificiality and your heart feels like a pin cushion. Start in some sensible profession. Unless you're a masochist and enjoy suffering—stay away from Broadway.

What is a Good High School Play?

by ROBERT ST. CLAIR

Playwright, Altadena, California

THERE are many professional plays that are ideally suited for high school production and some of them have become extremely popular. The present supply, however, is not nearly great enough to meet the demand, chiefly because there are too many objectionable lines and situations.

In spite of the fact that we are living in an age of frankness of speech and ideas we still balk at the thought of allowing boys and girls of impressionable age to say and do things before a public gathering that we would not countenance their saying and doing in the privacy of their own homes. Thus it is apparent that two of the most obvious requisites of the good high school drama should be moral plot and characterizations. I use the word "obvious" because I know that most drama directors choose their plays with similar thoughts in mind.

Next to motion pictures, perhaps, the amateur stage has suddenly become one of the greatest influences for moulding public opinion and behavior in the country today. This isn't surprising when we think of the thousands of young people annually taking part in hundreds of performances each year. Then there are tens of thousands of other young people who, with their friends and relatives, go to make up high school audiences. With this vast army of youth constantly memorizing and quoting the dialogue of the plays they are acting in, isn't it only logical to assume that the plays themselves can be instrumental in helping people to a right way of thinking?

In discussing high school dramatics we ought to, first of all, realize the all-important fact that the drama departments are a vital part of the modern educational system. They are not intended to make actors and actresses out of the students. If a boy or girl happens to be unusually gifted, all well and good. But it is to improve diction and voice projection and give the students poise, grace and self-assurance in front of large groups of people, that our school dramatic departments were principally designed.

As the author of a great many more-or-less popular three-acters, published exclusively for the amateur market, I, of course, have strong ideas regarding the ingredients to be used in a good high school play. My ideas may not coincide with those entertained by a lot of people, but they have seemed to work out pretty well in practice and it will do no harm to pass them along. In the first place, (and I expect to be heartily disagreed with on this point) I think that it is infinitely

more difficult to write a convincing play for amateurs than it is one for the professional stage. "Bosh!" I hear someone say, "Professional writing is much more exacting." I say that amateur plays are more exacting, and I have successfully written both.

For example, on the professional stage you have experienced players who, oftentimes, can make a play interesting by their brilliant acting when it would be downright boring otherwise. You have a free rein in choosing your characters because you know that the producer will engage performers whose physical traits in real life resemble your "brain children" as much as possible. On the other hand, when you write for "mass production" you must realize that all sorts of different people will portray the parts, so you must confine your character delineations to the standard, well-known types. You must invest them with backgrounds that everyone understands and put words in their mouths that can easily be digested and spoken by youthful players whose knowledge of characterization is handicapped by their inexperience.

Professionally, you may characterize sophisticated persons by allowing them to smoke and drink. You can't do that in an amateur play. You have free rein in the use of all the slang and profanity you wish to use. Try using it on the

amateur stage and see what happens! Your hardened criminal may utter no more harmless epithets than, "Omigosh", "You rat!" or "Holy smoke!" Likewise your fresh college boy must confine his slang to an occasional "Oh, boy!" or "Hi yah, toots?"

And these aren't the only restrictions. There are usually more girls than boys in the average drama class. This may be that boys are fundamentally less artistic than girls or it may be because of a dozen different reasons. Anyway the preponderance of the female has made it highly desirable to have more women than men in your play, or an evenly divided cast.

Another thing is the stage setting. Plays laid in one interior setting are much more in demand than those wherein the settings are changed. This confines the action to one room and often hinders story progression.

A smattering of romance is fine. Embracing and kissing, however, tends to make the players self-conscious and elicits subdued giggles and good-natured but unwelcome "wise cracks" from "out front." So it is best to have our heroes and heroines demonstrate their affections for each other by showing what they are prepared to go through in order to prove their love.

It seems to me that an ideal high school play, be it drama, comedy or mystery, should carry a creditable moral. On no account, however, should this be stressed in lines or action. Something like money theory in *You Can't Take it With You* is a good example of what I mean.

Dialogue should be smooth and brisk, with the speeches short and to the point. There must be an abundance of action and the plot should almost be strictly American in theme.

Domestic plays are usually good bets and are popular with young and old alike. We see our relatives, friends and neighbors in the make-believe characters on the stage and we can easily sympathize with their problems and laugh at their human frailties.

Simplicity in plot construction is the keynote to a successful performance, to my way of thinking. But above all we should not give our local thespian things to do that would tax the ability of a seasoned star, although I firmly believe that there should be plenty of opportunities for good acting.

I do not believe that it is wise to have more than two elderly character parts for the simple reason that no amount of ability or make up can convincingly disguise a young person in the 'teen age. There are exceptions to this rule, of course, but they are few and far between.

In summing up it strikes me that the ideal high school play should be written around young men and women and the problems that confront them, in and out of school. Youth is vital, full of wonderful plans to revolutionize the world. Why not tell the world about it in our plays?

Pasadena Mid-Summer Drama Festival

From the magic pen of James M. Barrie, whose plays turned every-day folk into lovable immortals of theatrical history, will come eight plays to feature the Sixth Annual Midsummer Drama Festival at the Pasadena Community Playhouse, June 24 to August 17. *Quality Street, The Professor's Love Story, Dear Brutus, The Little Minister, Mary Rose, A Kiss For Cinderella, The Admirable Crichton and What Every Woman Knows* will be the stagings in order. Following the custom of this noted drama event, each will be played for one week's period.

The beloved Scotsman of Thrums, regarded with affection wherever books are read and plays are played, left, by his death in 1938, an everlasting monument of memory on the highest peak of theatredom. To the world he was Sir James M. Barrie, but to playgoers he will always be Barrie, the perfect blender of fantasy and realism.

Pasadena and the Playhouse will again be centered in the spotlight of drama attention for this noteworthy event. Added to the list of eight plays will be the tangent theatre-going interests of special lectures, exhibits and festival breakfasts. Over the six-year span, with Shakespeare, Maxwell Anderson, Bernard Shaw, and the Great Southwest play cycles, Midsummer Drama Festivals have become an annual font of concentrated and related drama.

Rachel Crothers: First Lady Among the Dramatists

By JOSEPH MERSAND

Department of English, Boys' High School, Brooklyn, New York.

RACHEL CROTHERS has been writing successful plays for almost thirty-five years, which is a record unapproached in contemporary American drama. She has watched our drama grow and develop from the adolescent, diluted imitations of British and European successes to its world-acknowledged maturity. To that maturity she has made a significant contribution. Not only is she included in every history of the American drama, but some of her plays have found their way into anthologies, and she seems assured of her place in the pantheon of American dramatists.

Although she has never been awarded the Pulitzer Prize for the best play of the year, she has frequently been included in Burns Mantle's annual anthologies. Her *Nice People* is found in the 1920-1921 volume; *Mary the Third*, in the 1922-1923 volume; *Let Us Be Gay*, 1928-1929; *As Husbands Go*, 1930-1931; *When Ladies*, 1932-1933; *Susan and God*, 1937-1938. In the words of Joseph Wood Krutch in his volume, *The American Dram Since 1918*, "she is the only contemporary American dramatic writer who has been turning out successful plays for more than thirty years and who still holds a secure place on Broadway."^{*}

Naturally, thirty-odd years at any profession or art would give anyone a certain degree of dexterity. Skill in dramatic craftsmanship Miss Crothers has shown since her first important play, *A Man's World* (1909). Few artists of our theatre know more about dramatic construction and technique. If Edith Wharton wrote a book on *The Art of Fiction*, would not an *Art of Drama* be welcome from Miss Crothers? Yet other distinctions are readily granted to her. Her understanding of the feminine character is unusually shrewd. All the great experts on the female of the species—W. L. George, John Erskine, John Langdon-Davies, Havelock Ellis, John Macy—could learn something from one of our most penetrating students of her own sex. And long before Clare Boothe shocked theatre-goers with her parasites of Park Avenue, Miss Crothers had delineated the predatory representatives of the species.

Since the greatness of any dramatist always depends on his insight into his characters and his ability to portray them so that the audience will accept them as living beings, it will readily be admitted that Miss Crothers is in the highest ranks of American dramatists. In the realm of ideas, too, she has revealed an unusually lucid mind, pointing out contemporary

foibles and surveying critically our many imperfections. At a time when writers touched but hesitantly on such delicate subjects as the Double Standard, she wrote in *A Man's World* (1909), expressing an unusually bold viewpoint. Although her critics, like Eleanor Flexner in *American Playwrights, 1918-1938*, may find fault with her ideas, they readily grant that she always has a clear idea and the power to present it so that all may understand it. In the realm of dramatic dialogue she has few peers and hardly any superiors. Her themes are always significant. A Crothers play is always built upon an idea that provokes extended discussion. Finally, she has demonstrated that the American drama can produce high comedy of the best traditional variety, that English drama has by no means a monopoly of that form, and that a play by an American can be a cultural experience while it entertains at the same time.

Her recent plays have been extremely successful, because she has insisted upon casting and participating in the direction. Her latest play, *Susan and God* (1937), thanks to the exhilarating performance of Gertrude Lawrence, brilliant British comedy star, was one of her greatest successes. Five years earlier, *When Ladies Meet* was given the kind of feminine reception which came later for Clare Boothe's *The Women*. *As Husbands Go* (1931) and *Let Us Be Gay* (1929) complete her hits of the past decade.

What does she like to write about? There are a few subjects which interest her very much. There are some themes which captivated dramatists of the past decade, which one will never find in a Crothers play. Social Significance, which seemed to be the be-all and end-all of the decade of the Thirties passed her by. With the wisdom she has exhibited from her earliest plays, she knew that social systems and ideologies come and go, but the ways of the human heart will always be dramatic material. Marriage, Divorce, Infidelity, Young Love, Psychoanalysis, the Double Standard, these are some of the topics that have interested her. It would be platitudinous to say that she is interested primarily in men and women as they are adjusted or maladjusted, usually in married life. Her characters are usually well-bred, well-read, and well-to-do. One cannot recall easily a poor person or a boor in all her plays. One will always find sparkling conversation that is always stimulating and quotable. Sometimes, as in *When Ladies Meet*, there are so many *bon mots* that few are remembered.

Although Miss Crothers has probably never formulated her theories of the func-

tions and provinces of a dramatist, it is not difficult to perceive certain unifying threads which run throughout her plays. She is, for example, a critic of social behaviour. She follows the Ibsenian tradition in her early plays, such as *A Man's World*, which attacks a double standard of moral conduct. She dislikes the weaknesses of her own sex, whether it is their conceit, as in *Susan and God*; belated ideas of romance, as in *As Husbands Go*; false ideas of a career, as in *He and She*. She is for old-fashioned love as against cooked-up romance. She is for moderation in the younger generation. She thinks that a woman who makes a good wife has enough of a career to be satisfied.

Her plays of the last decade were all successful on the stage and are very readable. In *Susan and God* she satirized a flighty, affected American wife who left her dipsomaniac husband and went to England. There she imbibed a strong dose of personalized religion in the Buchmanian vein and returned to America determined to convert her friends. When her husband begs her to save him, she consents hesitatingly, and discovers that she can live with him again, and preserve the household for her daughter's sake. The portrait was not too flattering, but it was vivid and in the capable hands of Gertrude Lawrence, was always alive.

The problem of erring husbands is treated in *When Ladies Meet*, in which a philandering husband is confronted at last by his loyal wife and his newest flame, only to prove inadequate to either of them. In *Let Us Be Gay* and in *As Husbands Go* Miss Crothers turns the tables and criticizes the errant wives. In *Expressing Willie* (1924) she pokes fun at the then widely discussed theory of psychoanalysis. In *Nice People* (1929) she takes the younger generation to task for their post-war indiscretions. Thus it is seen that there is not a very wide range of subject matter in Miss Crothers' plays. One recalls Sir Walter Scott's remark about Jane Austen: "She possessed the exquisite touch which renders commonplace things interesting."

Perhaps marriage and divorce and infidelity are commonplace, particularly now when one out of every six marriages ends in divorce, but who of us has the right to say that there are subjects more vital than these? Take for example the many plays of social significance which were written in the Thirties. They were going to produce a new order in the theatre, in the social and economic systems, in the human heart. Have they succeeded in any way? Jane Austen made no effort to move mountains. In fact she was quite content to move the human heart. At a time when most American dramatists were too weak to stand on their own feet she wrote as strong and as courageous a play as our drama had known up to 1909. During 1910-1920 when O'Neill was only beginning to write his one-acters, and before he had even seen his *Beyond the Horizon*; when Max-

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Scene from the production of *RICHARD OF BORDEAUX* by students of the Dramatics Department of the Webster Groves, Missouri, High School. Directed by Mr. Eugene R. Wood. (Thespian Troupe No. 191.)

Acting from the Inside Out

By MIRIAM A. FRANKLIN

Director for the Division of Speech, Grove City College, Grove City, Pa.

IF you should stand at the window and watch the students leaving school just after they are dismissed, you would probably see many different expressions of emotion: two fellows "guying" a third, who answers them with snappy retorts; three girls laughing heartily as one of them relates an experience; another girl consoling her friend who is almost in tears over some misfortune; two young people who feel themselves deeply in love cooing together apart from the crowd; one fellow slapping his buddy on the back as he hears with surprise about something that has happened. And so on and on. We all feel emotions and everybody expresses these feelings.

Every play is full of emotions to be expressed. They are the heart of drama about which the action, dialogue, movement, and plot are built. Expression of emotion is the very essence of dramatic production; without it the acting seems shallow and insincere. Yet sincere expression is hard for some actors.

How much emotion the actor should show is an unanswered question. Famous actors disagree on this point. In fact some change their ideas during the course of their years on the stage. Katharine Cornell, who now plays with beautiful restraint, in her earlier years on the stage shed real tears and caused her audiences to marvel. The spectators lost sight of the play in watching the tears. The great actress no longer sheds tears in her acting but suggests deep emotions more satisfactorily without them.

The expressing of emotions usually presents a real problem for young actors. Because many of them have trouble getting

"the feel," the play when presented is short-weight and makes the audience feel cheated. Expressing of emotions for the stage should be a combination of old experiences and new. You have to give your customers much of the old—that which you already have, your stored-up memories of emotion. The new experiences are those which belong to the character you are interpreting. They must be combined and made to fit the character you are representing. You may be a bank robber in the play and, because you have never robbed a bank, you are inclined to think that the acting of that role calls for entirely new feelings. But it doesn't. You will need to go to your storehouse of emotional experiences. This storehouse is filled with hundreds of little bundles—bundles of emotions—packed tightly inside your brain and nerve cells. Some of these emotional experiences have lain dormant for many years. They have become terribly stiff from lack of exercise. When you dig them out you may find that they won't work well for you. They can't. What they need is exercise. If you pull them out of hiding, set them on their feet and force them around the track a few times, they will be ready to serve you.

Your whole human instrument must respond to your will: your voice, brain, eyes and face, hands, torso, and above all your emotions. When you have perfected

This is the seventh and concluding article on acting techniques for young actors. Professor Franklin is a recognized authority in play production and is the author of the popular text-book, *REHEARSAL*, published by Prentice-Hall.

the instrument, you will discover that you can act convincingly either the bereaved parent mourning for the dead child or the uneasy high school student called to the principal's office. You will be able to act sincerely the part of the South African seeing a white man for the first time, or the dust-bowl farmer drenched in discouragement.

The art of acting consists in "getting an effect." You do not need actually to experience the emotion fully in order to give the right effect. On the stage we don't want any players in the white heat of rage, any heart-stricken mourners at the deathbed, nor any players struck by uncontrollable mirth. But we do want the actor to seem to be angry or sorrowful or happy. You can enact emotional scenes most effectively if you *do not* overact. Instead, use suggestion—much of suggestion—and little of realism. To drop your face sorrowfully into your hands will suggest a cry, or low tones and clenched hands will suggest anger. The realism that you use should come from within, but most of your acting will be made up of suggestion, not of realism. Strive more and more to act from the inside outward rather than on the outside only. So remember, you should not *live* the part as you enact it. You should not feel it too deeply; but you should sense the feeling somewhat from within, so that your whole body will instinctively respond. You won't then need to say to yourself, "I must use gestures of surprise when Tommy taps me on the shoulder." If you are acting from within outward the right gestures will just come; they will be there and you will coordinate them with the emotion without thinking. On the amateur stage we see too much acting from the neck up. This is false. Strive to avoid it.

But how can the young actor acquire this inner feeling—that is our consideration. The one greatest help is to learn to



Cast for the production of *JANE EYRE* as staged by members of Thespian Troupe No. 125 at Wetumpka, Alabama, High School. Directed by Miss Margaret Hogan.

remember your emotions. Make them accessible. From the time you showed a temper because your mother lay you in the basinette instead of holding you, you have been building a storehouse of emotional experiences. To remember your emotions you need to recall an incident step by step in which you felt a similar emotion. As you recall it, relate aloud the steps by which it progressed. Perhaps you are cast for the murderer in the play. You have never murdered anybody, nor have you ever felt a desire to murder. You should recall an incident which made you feel more murderous than any other. Have you not tried to take a nap on a warm afternoon in late fall? Frosts have left the trees nearly naked. The bugs and flies have gone with the summer—all except one fly! He circles 'round and 'round and 'round you. He lights upon your hand, and you slap at him. He is stiff and old but much too quick for that slap. When you are in the first stages of slumber he lights upon your forehead and goes walking. Again you feel murderous, and give your forehead a dreadful whack—but not the fly. The next time he tries your cheek, then your nose, and finally your mouth. Your anger increases until you fairly sizzle. You have become a bundle of tense muscles and nerves from top to toe. As you recall step by step the incident, and recount it yourself or someone else, your anger can grow and grow until you are quite capable of playing the murderer. You have remembered the feeling and in the process have taken on the physical reaction which went with it.

Now try to recall an entirely different emotional experience. Your role calls for you to show first great delight at the news of your father's return from a journey, then disappointment when he tells you that he is going to marry the unpleasant neighbor woman, thus placing you under her control. In recalling the emotions of anticipation and joy followed by disappointment, you may think of the time when your school sought an award. There

were first those moments of expectation, then the breathless waiting for the judge to make "a few remarks." He had looked at his notes, had searched for and found his glasses, then had told a story. Your muscles grew tighter, your breath came shorter, and you sat farther forward straining eyes and ears. After the story the judge made kindly remarks about the contest as a whole, the splendid spirit of the contestants, and the benefit to be derived by all the participants. At last he announced the third place winner. Your heart pounded harder, you held your feet rigidly together, and gripped your fingers tightly. He made more remarks, praised other activities and urged all to continue the good works. Then he announced second place winners. Your eyes stared in front of you, your jaw set tightly, your finger nails dug into your palms. Then the first place was announced. Your school was not the winner. You felt numb and stunned. You saw nothing; you heard none of the cheers. Your brain seemed completely dulled.

The memory of emotion is an essential attribute for the actor. It links his feelings with actions, tying all together so that it is difficult to separate them. Recalling emotional experiences can become a part of preparing any role. These experiences can become an essential part of your life and your craft. You all have these memories of feelings. You must first awaken your emotions, then control them, then apply them. Having words to say makes these experiences return more readily and more definitely.

Much practice is needed to become sure of yourself. You will first wish to work at the task alone—inside yourself—and then with someone else. When you learn to concentrate, the recall of emotional reactions will come more quickly, with less thought. Finally you will have such emotional control that the feeling will come with a flash.

Many high school students are striving to improve their acting in order to present plays more artistically. If you are

one of these, you will do well to work for emotional expression coming from within you. If it comes first on the inside, it will appear not merely in head and voice, but in the whole body. The muscles will learn to respond accordingly, thus making you acting sincere and convincing. In acting each of the following pantomimes, try to reach back into your storehouse and recall a similar emotional experience which you can make use of:

1. You are a young person reading a book. A smile begins to twitch the corners of your mouth; this is followed by a suppressed chuckle, then by an audible laugh; and finally the climax comes when you, dropping the book into your lap, throw back your head in uproarious laughter.

2. You are the parent of a wayward young man who, after being imprisoned for theft and having served his time, was finally released. He came home to assure you that he planned to "go straight" from that time forward. He told you that he would seek employment in another community but would write often to tell you of his success. You have waited anxiously for a letter, but none has come. It is now your birthday, and you feel confident that he will remember it with a letter or a card. You watch for the postman. He arrives eventually with the letter which you excitedly open. These few brief words meet your eye: "Send fifty dollars quick. These nutty cops think they got me, but they ain't keeping me."

3. Your young brother has a puppy which he loves as much as a boy can. It runs into the middle of a busy street where fast-moving cars are moving in both directions. You and the little brother call frantically for the pup to come back to you, but it does not heed. It is struck by a car and killed. During the incident you were first worried for the dog, then shocked by the accident, then sad because of the dog's death, and finally you devote your attention and sympathy to the little brother who is inconsolable.

4. Your mother has been taken to the operating room of the hospital. You are waiting anxiously outside the door of the room hoping to get some early word of consolation regarding her condition. A nurse comes from the room. You seek some news of her but she brushes you aside, saying she cannot stop until later. You try to question an interne but with similar success. The minutes drag like hours. Again the door opens, this time to bring the cart through, upon which your mother is lying. You are sick with anxiety. The doctor comes to you, places his hands upon your shoulder and says, "Well, my boy, she's all right. She came through nicely."

Opportunities for Students With Talent in Dramatics

by FRANCES WEAVER

Thespian Troupe Sponsor, Oceanside High School, Oceanside, New York

The Pageant Director

THE director has the general supervision of both dramatic and civic aspects of the pageant. He must, therefore, be well equipped as a producer and also well versed in the technique of community organization. Special courses in pageantry or experience under the direction of a pageant director of established reputation are also essential. An understanding of sociology and related subjects is necessary for the social vision that is so important to successful pageantry. The salary of the pageant director varies from twenty-five dollars a week to three hundred a week. The profession is open to both men and women. The work is intermittent rather than regular, but in spite of this the nervous and physical strain can hardly be exaggerated. There is a lack of well-trained pageant directors. Here is an open field for those who can qualify.

Dramatic Directors for Amateur Organizations

Numerous companies send boys and girls out to direct amateur theatricals in small communities. The nervous and physical strains are terrific because the director has the complete burden of responsibility for tickets and advertising as well as for casting, rehearsing and costuming. The whole thing must be done in from two to three weeks. The remuneration is small and ranges from mere meeting of expenses to a possible \$2,500 per year in very rare instances. The shows that are produced are far from artistic and the director is decidedly limited by time and vehicle. The experience gained, however, is valuable, if physical strength will permit the constant moving and the nervous strain.

There are other organizations that provide coaches or directors for small high schools and colleges that do not have regular dramatic departments. In these, much more time is given, remuneration is more, and the quality of service demanded is much higher. Actual stage experience or college training are necessary prerequisites.

Teacher of Dramatics

I have purposely, almost, omitted the teacher. So many people just naturally fall into that profession without realizing what is happening. The advantages are, of course, the long vocations, the security, the pleasant associations, the large salary (large for teachers). The disadvantages

This is the last in a series of four articles on occupational opportunities for high school students with talent in dramatics. The material presented here was originally prepared by Miss Weaver for the Department of Personnel, New York University.—Editor.

include the terrific nervous strain, the long and irregular hours and the ever-changing program of work. This last may be an advantage. The field is larger, perhaps, than for most other branches of the profession.

All teachers should teach pupils, not subjects and it is often difficult to find a teacher of dramatics who is able to place her subject in a secondary position. She is so imbued with her art that she is likely to forget the nobler side. Search all the fields and when you are sure that teaching is your choice, enter it wholeheartedly. After you have made your decision, let there be no regrets.

CONCLUSION

It is impossible, even in a small measure, to cover all of the opportunities open to young men and women who possess dramatic ability. It will be much easier and more truthful to say now that almost every profession and every occupation demands, for perfection in results, at least a bit of dramatic talent.

The ministry is one profession often overlooked. There is a dearth of good ministers and no field offers a better opportunity for the exercise of the psychology that best functions through the dramatic principle.

In a measure, this same psychology can be used to great advantage in the medical world. The physician who can "set a stage" and build up a scene, is able to treat effectively a patient who needs mental hygiene rather than medical assistance.

The salesman, regardless of his line, who is unable to act a part and make a speech will never be truly successful. In the news field, many types of news stories, news features, society news, reports on amateur theatricals, demand a flair for the spectacular, the dramatic. In politics, in law, in clubs and organizations of all kinds, ideas are "put across" best by the leader who is fundamentally a showman.

There is the professional story teller in libraries and museums. Remuneration is fairly good and the work is pleasant and regular. A good story teller, by being ingenious, may even create a position for herself. The mother who can tell stories to her children and who can help them in their world of "make believe" has a de-

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cided advantage over the mother who lacks these abilities.

Life is essentially dramatic. The essence of the drama enters into every pursuit, whether it be the "pursuit of happiness" or the pursuit of a livelihood.

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The Directors' Round Table

CONTROLLING THE STAGE CREW

by DARRELL GOOCH

Howe High School, Indianapolis, Ind.

A FEW DAYS ago my principal called me into his office and asked me a question which I could not answer at the time.

He asked, "How do you control your stage crew of twelve to fifteen boys? They get no credit for their work. They spent hours of extra time outside of school. What do you do to them?"

Because I was unprepared for these questions, my answer was a poor one.

I said, "I just make it interesting for them."

Of course, that was no answer. He wanted to know "how" and "why" these ordinary high school boys are so enthusiastic about their work.

I began to think about the situation, and I became almost frightened at the amount of work I was getting out of these youngsters. The secret of it all seemed to be centered in five things.

First of all, I, along with every other director of plays, have a definite hold on high school students which is a result of an instinctive interest in the "make-believe" world. It doesn't matter whether it is in acting, stage work, make-up, or costuming, the pupils want to "play like." They want to create a surrounding remote from their own daily experiences. In all phases of dramatic activities the director has an opportunity to furnish an outlet for these in-born feelings. If the teacher fails to make use of this natural inclination to create, he is missing the chance of a lifetime.

Since the youngsters are already alive to the situation, the second step is to organize the group. The natural thing is to start with the boys who have had experience working on the stage or to find boys who have some special abilities. One of my boys is interested in lighting; therefore, I place him in complete charge of lights and lighting equipment. Another boy seems to be rather good at handling scenery. He is placed in charge of all scenery, and equipment, including the supervision of reconstructing and redecorating flats. There is always a need for platforms, doors, casings, and wall-board cutouts. Since one boy has a father who is a carpenter, and since the boy seems to be following in his father's foot-steps, it seems only logical he should be stage carpenter. No one is called "head-stage manager," because that creates a feeling of jealousy. Even though each looks after his own department, it is understood that each person will work where he is most needed. This inter-relationship is necessary when scenery is being prepared and

redecorated, when lights are being put in proper places, and when there is a great amount of carpentry to be done.

The next step is to find a place for the new members of the organization. Each new person makes his own choice as to the department he prefers. He is then "coached" by the older member heading that particular group. As a result of this "hand-me-down" process never do I have to ask, "What will I do when John and Max graduate?"

Recently in a production of *Wings of the Morning* the lights, preparation of scenery, sound effects, and scenery changes were handled entirely by the new members of the stage staff. They were asked to solve their own problems. The first night of the play things didn't go so well back stage. I had to call upon the experienced boys to help. The second night I was shocked to find the new members had worked out some plans of procedure. They had systematized the whole thing. Without suggestions on my part they arranged for the cast to keep off stage during scenery changes. In order to enforce this rule they put the actors in a room and placed a doorman on duty to see that no one trespassed. Likewise one of the stage boys took it upon himself to keep the stage staff of 12 boys in a room during each act. Throughout the performance each boy went from one job to another, and the whole thing moved like a huge machine. These boys worked so efficiently that on the second night they had the set changed between acts one and two in six minutes.

After each play I find the staff members ask two questions: "When is the next play?" "What work is there for us to do?"

Fourth, it is surprising what can be gained with a volunteer group like this when you say, "don't you think?" instead of "it must be this way." I am so confident of the good judgment of my stage crew that I never make a final decision regarding sets, lights, and colors without first checking with the boys. In practically every play I find their judgment as good as mine, and in connection with smaller things they are sometimes wiser than I. As a result of this close relationship they feel they have had much to do with this interesting, exciting make-believe world.

The last reason for a successful stage crew is in relation to recognition. I never let a play go by without praising the work of these fellows. In the advertising and news stories I always try to emphasize some special phase of the staging. In *Night of January 16th* I stressed the set which had been constructed and painted entirely by the crew. The set was done in grey and black. In my stories for *Wings of the Morning* I stressed the light-

ing effects and off-stage sounds which were rather unusual. I always include the names of the stage crew on the programs. During the last week of the play I always include the stage boys in my talks to the cast. I make them feel they are a part of the show. I never let the cast forget that the show would be impossible without their fellow craftsmen.

Before this year is finished, I plan to use a new scheme in order to give more publicity to my stage crew. I am going to select a play which requires change of set. I shall open the curtains between acts and let the audience see the boys at work. This will give the fellows a certain pride in their efficiency and skill.

If anyone should question me again concerning the control of my stage crew, I would quickly answer, "I furnish an outlet of an inner urge on the part of the individual to make-believe; I make them feel the thrill of organization and a pride in doing new things; I let them do things in their own way with slight supervision; and I make them proud of their efforts by giving credit where credit is due."

A PLAYWRITING PROJECT

By MAY E. CONNOR

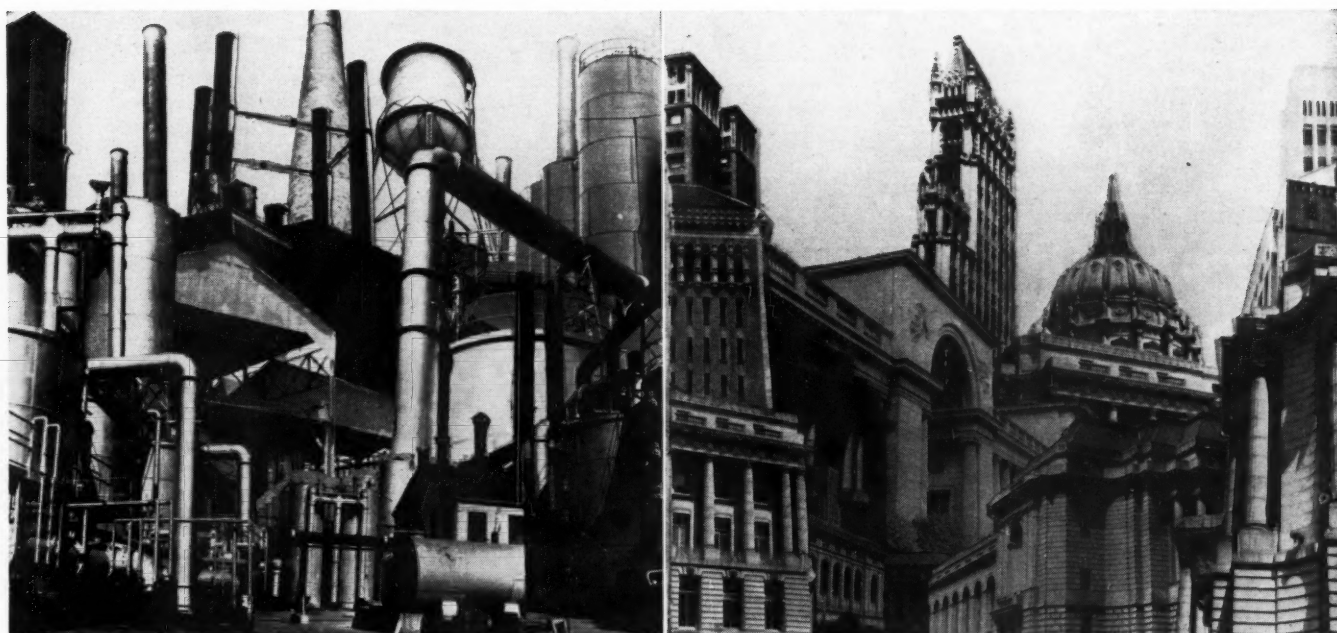
Tupper Lake, N. Y., High School

PLAYWRITING was the next project for my dramatics II class. The pertinent question was how to provide an incentive for these potential playwrights. Why not conduct a playwriting contest in which the judge would be an experienced playwright and further experiment by letting the authors of the plays chosen as superior produce them in an evening of three original one-acts! The school administration consented; the class was enthusiastic in its acceptance of the plan.

Studying the technique of the one-act play; reading, discussing, analyzing,—to gain a general acquaintance with the requisites of that form of the drama; writing plays from short stories to be initiated into the difficulties encountered in using the new medium—all became stepping stones to the creation of their own plays.

Six of the fifteen plays submitted by the class members were sent for critical appraisal to Walter C. Roberts, playwright and scenario writer, who reviewed the students' efforts and termed them "by and large superior to the product of playwriting classes in college." He selected as best *I Do So Bequeath*, a fast-moving satire by Aaron Silnutzer; *Perspective*, a philosophical drama with unusual theme by Shirley Laramay, and a farce with clever character delineations, *It Can Happen Here*, by Nina LaFountain. He wrote individual criticisms to all six authors.

The author-directors started work immediately on "their own" productions. They appointed the staff, did the casting, conducted rehearsals and supervised all



Left, picture of factories and, right, picture of public buildings used as background for the production of George Savage's *SEE HOW THEY RUN* as described in Mr. McLean's article below.

details of production. I attended only the last dress rehearsal before the public performance.

After the final curtain on the evening of the public performance, the first-nighters called "Authors! Authors!" and the three proud playwrights appeared to receive the plaudits of the audience and to be presented copies of contemporary three-act plays as gifts from their casts.

Had the playwriting project been worthwhile? Yes, indeed, it had. The students had been placed in situations which progressive education demands be created—"those in which opportunities for both leadership and followership are presented." There had been no teacher supervision at evening rehearsal in the school auditorium; the students themselves were on their own responsibility. A problem arose in one play when two girls were not cooperating. The director and cast conferred with me, and, at their suggestion, the girls were removed from the play. The importance of cooperation and respect for authority in a group of one's age and ability limits had to be learned. The techniques of directing were discussed in dramatics II class and general rules summarized for the best methods of getting along with people; principles of play production learned in dramatics I had been put into practice.

Administration and student both were very proud of the playwriting project.

CAMERA ANGLE

By SCOTT McLEAN

San Francisco, California

THE technical director invariably likes to use all the talented people he can find. He's used the artist, the dress-

Dramatics Clubs

Are you interested in establishing a stronger dramatics club in your high school next fall? If so, we suggest that you order at once a copy of *DRAMATICS CLUBS*, by F. L. Winship, published by Walter H. Baker Co., 178 Tremont St., Boston, Mass. The booklet is available free of charge. A postal card will bring you a copy. It is one of the very best in the field.

maker, the carpenter, but it's seldom he's used the camera fiend. I was particularly delighted when given George Savage's *See How They Run* to set, to find use for the camera. *See How They Run* uses the office of the Mayor in one set, the office of a labor union in a second set, and the office of the President of the University in the third set. Obviously the sets would be too much alike unless we could think of some refreshing angle.

In one wall of the set we devised a huge window 15 feet high. Then we set the photographer at work for a view from the window for the first two sets. In the third set we converted the window into a huge bookcase.

From the office of the Mayor, it seemed logical we should see the public buildings of a large city. We had our photographer take a number of pictures of public buildings. Some were taken from ground level, some taken looking upward, some taken from higher elevations. We selected about two dozen pictures from the group taken, cut out the buildings, grouped them in together to make the impression of a view from the Mayor's window. When we satisfied ourselves we had a satisfactory grouping, we enlarged each section separately with the scale of one inch to one foot. Then we again assembled the pictures on

a huge frame, set it back from the window opening and gave it lighting that would make it seem effective. (See Picture [Right] on this page.)

From the office of the labor union, one would expect to see factories and mills. We had again a number of pictures taken of machines, pipes, boilers and chimneys. Again we selected about two dozen of the pictures and again worked out a scene that was later enlarged. (See Picture [Left] on this page.)

The difficult problem is, of course, the composition. We worked from the corners in, for we had to consider what would be visible to the people in each part of the audience. The finished frame must have more width than the window since the audience looked "through" the window.

One paper in San Francisco commented as follows: "In two sequences, the entire background consists of giant photo murals done in montage. So far as is known, this is the first time in any theatre that photo-murals have been used as backdrops, and the effect is more than satisfying." Another paper said: "Photographic backdrops give swiftness to it."

The idea of photographic murals was developed particularly for *See How They Run* but it would work well in a number of plays where it is desirable to give some relationship between the immediate setting and its environs. Mr. Clausennius, who made the pictures and the enlargements, really enjoyed the work—as I'm sure any photographer would.

The making of a satisfactory mural of this kind is not beyond the ability of young people who know how to use a camera. The problems involved are interesting and the effects arresting.



Students in the class in radio at South High School, Columbus, Ohio, under the direction of Miss Marguerite Fleming.

PROLOGUE TO GLORY

BY FLORENCE M. REES

Twin Falls, Idaho, High School

"Though 'they laid him down on a quiet hill
Abraham's ghost will not be still.
Abraham's ghost, as man alive,
Has trodden the stage since '65.
For, martyr, statesman or gangling boy,
At Washington, Gettysburg or Illinois,
In the rural jeans they snickered at
Or the rusty coat and the stovepipe hat,
That home-spun figure will always seem
America's legend, America's dream."

—Phyllis McGinley.

TODAY, when American ideals and standards are becoming dearer, when we consider our heritage and its preservation, it seems fitting to select a play based on the New Salem, or youthful years of Abraham Lincoln. If there is, within range of choice, a young man of physical build, character and voice requirements, there is no reason why *Prologue To Glory* should not be done by either high schools or colleges.

From the educational standpoint, it is inspirational to cast and audience alike. From the artistic view, I would say it is beautiful and appealing. From the box-office the report was "the best financial returns yet known."

If the director has or can find an "Abe Lincoln," there are few if any casting difficulties. I would suggest, however, that it is helpful to read a few good Lincoln biographies, particularly *The Prairie Years* by Sandburg, before casting, for one can easily find accurate descriptions of the very people who come and go in the scenes. For the utmost in charm of that sincerely sweet old-fashioned variety, the chosen Ann Rutledge should be a girl of the type to inspire the idealistic young Lincoln. All those cast should be able to wear costumes of the period as naturally as their own of today.

Difficulties of staging may at first seem too great to justify choice of the play,

and yet these can be easily solved. As written, the play is divided in two acts of eight scenes, but we produced it in the same number of scenes and four acts, rather than two. Since Scene 1 has but few characters, tree flats may be moved forward in closed form to present a thicket near Tom Lincoln's farm. These may then be moved back, right and left, as far as possible, disclosing a backdrop exterior and giving room for the wrestling match in Scene 2. For Scenes 1 and 2 of Act II, we used a cyclorama or curtain of medium brown, and merely changed the furnishing between scenes. A stone wall transformed the set used in Act I, while its removal and the addition of benches for the loafing politicians easily solved the question of scenes in Act III. Although Scene 1 of Act IV was meant to be portrayed in the interior of Rutledge Inn, we found it desirable to present as near the Inn instead, and substituted old-time-appearing porch furniture and so forth for required action. The final scene at Bowling Green's place was again the exterior, with addition of trees and bushes and different home-made-looking seats and benches.

The properties seem numerous as listed, particularly for the store scene, but here again it is easily possible to cut down to essentials only. Indeed, we found that the play gained rather than lost by simple settings and only properties appropriate and necessary to the time and action.

All the music used was characteristically American and of Lincoln's time rather than any other. For example, we used *Battle Hymn of the Republic* as a theme song and other familiar airs, as *Seeing Nellie Home*, *Believe Me If All Those Endearing Young Charms*, etc., to prepare or emphasize scene moods. Lincoln's campaign song to the tune of *The Old Grey Mare* brought surprised and pleased audience response.

LAMPS

by HELEN DUNHAM

Stambaugh, Mich., High School

MANY stores now have on sale a small bed lamp with lens that concentrates the beam of light, and burns a 60-watt bulb. The price is \$1.00. The lamp can be fastened by a clamp and can be rotated so that the light can be focused. One can also place colored gelatin behind the lens. We used two of them in our production of the play, *The Ghost Flies South*, to cross-spot a playing area. If you have little lighting equipment and a small stage, you will find these lamps quite useful.

Rachel Crothers: First Lady

(Continued from page 8)

well Anderson, Philip Barry, Robert Sherwood, were still in college; when Clifford Odets was only in high school, Rachel Crothers was writing with skill, good taste, and humor. In the last decade, when there was much tumult and shouting, all of which has already died, she persevered in her long-established manner, adding one popular success to another, until *Susan and God*, in which all her strength and her few weaknesses were revealed.

Hardly any contemporary who wrote in the first decade of this century is active today. Is it not amazing that Miss Crothers' thirtieth play should be witnessed by the children of those young men and women who were thrilled by *A Man's World*? Her many admirers look forward expectantly to her newest play, knowing in advance that it will treat of the eternal verities with lucidity and with balance, with wit and with wisdom, with superb technical skill and yet with a naturalness which simulates life. Perhaps the most significant contribution from the point of view of longevity and consistency of effort to the American drama of our time has been made by Rachel Crothers.



With the Radio Editor



This page is published for teachers and students interested in radio activities at the high school level. Readers' comments and suggestions are welcomed.

Edited by G. HARRY WRIGHT

Drama Department, Kent State University, Kent, Ohio

Question: Who is Walter Damrosch?

Answer: Second baseman for the Chicago White Sox.

Question: What do you know about the Great Plays Series?

Answer: It is a list of outstanding feats in American football and baseball games.

Question: Who is Arturo Toscanini?

Answer: Comedian on the Jack Benny program.

SILLY, you say? True, but these are some of the answers given by high school students when a group of them were quizzed informally a short time ago to discover what their listening habits were, and how much they knew about current radio programs. However, these same students knew all about Charlie McCarthy, Tommy Dorsey, Benny Goodman, Artie Shaw, Gracie Allen and George Burns, and could tell right off who was the leading citizen of Van Buren, Arkansas. Most of them confessed that they had never heard a broadcast of the Metropolitan Opera, The World Is Yours, Pilgrimage of Poetry, or any one of a dozen other fine and worthwhile programs. They did, however, listen to Amos 'n' Andy, Lum and Abner, Bob Hope, Fibber McGee, and in fact, to most of the more popular variety hours and dance band programs.

All of which suggests that most of us are sadly in need of checking up on our listening habits, of finding out what really good programs are available, and most of all, of learning to discriminate between the good and worthwhile on the one hand, and the trivial and inconsequential on the other. Lest I be labelled an old fogey, let me hasten to state that comedy and variety programs are perfectly all right, and that even swing bands have their place in the young person's scheme of things. Everybody needs relaxation, and a good laugh never hurts anybody. Furthermore, one of the legitimate functions of radio is to entertain, and our loudspeakers would be pretty dull company if they emitted only sober-sided education throughout the entire day and evening.

But it does seem too bad that many of us are so limited in our tastes that we are unable to enjoy anything but the thin and trivial, and that we completely ignore the many fine programs which are given to us absolutely free—programs which could enrich our lives and make us understand so much better the world about us and the beings that populate that world.

As a matter of fact, the person who listens only to swing bands and comedians doesn't know what he is missing. He believes, as a rule, that any program which

attempts to inform, or to attain any cultural level, is necessarily stuffy and dull. This just isn't so. Some of the best writing, directorial, and acting talent in America is employed to give our better programs that touch of showmanship, that high excitement and interest, which we are accustomed to seeing in the theatre. The average person needs to discover this. I know of no fictional drama more absorbing and packed with adventure than the true dramas presented on "The World Is Yours" series. Anyone can, with a little concentration, enjoy the plays of the "Great Plays" series infinitely more than he can the average movie or comedy skit. The Metropolitan Operas are presented so that the average listener can understand them and thrill to their beautiful music. The "On Your Job" series leads the young listener into the thrilling adventure of choosing a career by dramatizing vocations. These are only a few examples out of hundreds.

This wider taste should be developed early in life. Radio programs of the future will be only as good as we demand that they be, and high school students have a long listening future ahead of them. I believe that the place to begin is in the high schools of the nation. Here are some suggestions as to what might be done:

1. Every boy and girl should make it his own individual responsibility to scan the radio schedule regularly, and to listen to as many programs as possible which present good music and drama, or which have political, religious, economic, artistic, or social significance. He should not only listen, but he should attempt to understand and evaluate the programs, and he should discuss them with his friends and teachers.

2. Students should take the initiative in organizing listening groups to meet together to hear programs and to discuss them frankly and critically.

3. Students as individuals and in groups ought to write to the broadcasters, telling them what they think of specific programs. Broadcasters are anxious to get these reactions, and are quick to respond to them.

4. Teachers of radio speaking and directors of workshops ought to encourage the formation of good listening habits, should meet with their students to listen to programs, and should discuss those programs with the student.

5. All teachers should consider it a part of their duty as educators to call attention to outstanding programs, and to give a limited amount of class time occasionally to the discussion of specific programs.

6. Teachers should call especial attention to programs covering material which they themselves teach, and should ask their students to listen to those programs. For example, a civics teacher should ask his students to listen to Lowell Thomas, H. V. Kaltenborn, the various international broadcasts, "American Town Meeting of the Air," and many others of like nature. Art teachers should discuss with their students the "Art For Your Sake" programs. Music teachers have an embarrassment of riches in programs which they might assign and discuss.

Literature teachers should suggest "Pilgrimage of Poetry" and "Adventure in Reading," as well as "Between the Bookends" and many others. These are only a few of the examples of hundreds of possibilities for suggestions. Teachers can render a service in this way, not only by enriching their teaching, but also by helping to develop taste in radio programs.

7. Try to make listening more interesting and meaningful by using the many listening aids available. In most cases they can be secured from the broadcasters for little or nothing.

* * *

MOST programs of an educational nature are printed in leaflet form, or have Listener's Guides which are designed to make the program more interesting and understandable, and which contain suggestions and sources for further study. Some of these are free, and others come at nominal cost. They are published by N. B. C., C. B. S., Columbia University Press, and others. Information concerning them may be obtained by writing to the Information Department of the network broadcasting the program in which you are interested. N. B. C. publishes a catalogue of Listener's Aids which may be obtained free of charge from Information Department, NBC, RCA Building, New York.

* * *

A NEW term is coming into use in radio—at least in the college and university field. That term is "wired radio". The idea was originated at Brown University four years ago, and has grown until it has been taken up by students at many eastern and a few middle-western schools.

Here is the system as it operates at Brown. A studio comparable to any other broadcasting studio is installed in one of the buildings. Wires are run from this studio to all university buildings, men's and women's dormitories, and fraternity and sorority houses on the campus. Programs are sent out by small transmitter during the hours of 5 to 8 and 9:30 to 11 each evening, and may be received by students and others through ordinary radio receiving sets. Programs may not only be received in any of the buildings wired, but by means of portable equipment may be sent out from any of these buildings. Thus serenades, lectures, bull sessions, debates, athletic events, dramatic entertainments, and in fact all types of college activity may be broadcast from wherever they occur and the whole student body may receive them. Religious services also may be brought to the students in this manner.

One hundred and fifty students are engaged in the work, and surveys show that there is a regular listening audience of 2000. The university exercises no supervision, since it is not required or asked to give financial support. The system is completely student-owned, operated, and supported. Original equipment was donated by interested and enthusiastic students, and expenses are met at present by selling advertising at low rates to firms nearby who have students for customers. No license is required from the Federal Communications Commission, since the programs do not go beyond the campus and the system cannot be considered a broadcasting station in the ordinary sense. This means complete freedom from program control or censorship.

Students at Brown are enthusiastic about the project, which is known as Brown Network, and many other schools are working on the same idea. In fact, they are banding together in an organization known as the Intercollegiate Broadcasting System, and look forward to the day in the very near future when the member colleges will be able to trade programs, and to broadcast by leased wire to one another's campuses over distances of hundreds of miles.

This whole movement will bear watching. By the time many present-day Thespians reach college, the colleges of the nation may be linked in a coast-to-coast intercollegiate network presenting programs exclusively for students.

Staging the High School Play

This department is designed to assist teachers in choosing, casting, and producing plays on the high school level. Suggestions as to plays which should be discussed next or how this department can be of greater assistance to teachers will be welcomed.

Edited by EARL W. BLANK

Thespian National Director and Director of Dramatics at Berea College, Berea, Ky.

BOSTON BLUES

BOSTON BLUES, by E. L. Perrine, is published by Row, Peterson & Company of Evanston, Illinois. No doubt many of you have used the very fine Row, Peterson percentage royalty plan. Royalty for each performance is 15 per cent of the gross receipts, with a maximum of \$25.00 and no minimum. A group cannot go "in the hole" with this plan. The books are 75c each.

There are 8 men and 6 women in the cast. The play is almost hilarious comedy. It has been my experience that audiences like the play a great deal, and I have staged the play before two different types of audiences.

One setting is used throughout the three acts. This setting is a drawing-room scene. It is in the home of the Ellsworth family of Boston. Since the family represents some wealth, the setting should reflect this. The accompanying picture (below) of the set used in the Eveleth (Minnesota) Junior College production reflects the degree of wealth mentioned. This set was designed and executed by Donald Woods while a student in Eveleth Junior College. He was assisted in an advisory capacity by Arne Nybak of the Children's Theatre of Duluth. You will remember Mr. Woods' fine staging of *Seven Keys to Baldpate* in the March issue of this magazine. Since I have discussed the set at this time, I shall give the color scheme used, and this will help to determine some of the suggestions on costuming the various characters.

The walls are cream with a velour backing in the center arch. This curtain

is a dark gray with an amber light over the statue. The statue is more or less a symbol of the ornateness of such a home. There are two bookcases on the back walls which are painted a deep blue. On each is a bust in white. The pictures above each case are painted in definite modernistic style. The one at right stage is in browns, light greens and against a pale gray background. Near these cases are two chairs. One is in silver and black and the other is painted with gilt. The low benches are painted deep blue and are padded in white with blue straps. The fireplace is in cream with a fire of blue, yellow, red and orange strips of cellophane shooting up from an artificial log. Inside the log is a small electric fan. The fire-screen hides all the mechanics of this effective fire. The bowl on the fireplace mantel is brown. The chair near the fireplace is in gilt; its duplicate across the way is silver and black. The bowl on the piano is housing a bouquet of mari-golds, artificial of course. The risers of the stairway are deep blue and the treads are white. Bright-colored book jackets on the books and bric-a-brac fill the cases. The ceiling border is cream, but it is lighter than the walls. Amber lights with a goodly amount of surprise pink can light the stage. The lamp should be on in Act I, since it is an evening in October in Boston. The effect of morning and afternoon can be secured by throwing more or less light from the borders and foots.

Let me quote the catalog write-up of the play: "A sparkling comedy of charming people. The Ellsworths of Boston are old, established, and Republican in family, at least as far as Grandmother Ellsworth is concerned. Her son, George, is a pro-

fessor at Harvard and an understanding and indulgent parent to Margaret, Dan and Antoinette. But it is Grandmother who wields the real authority, and, as the play begins, she has just returned from England, to discover that the "mice" have "played" considerably in her absence.

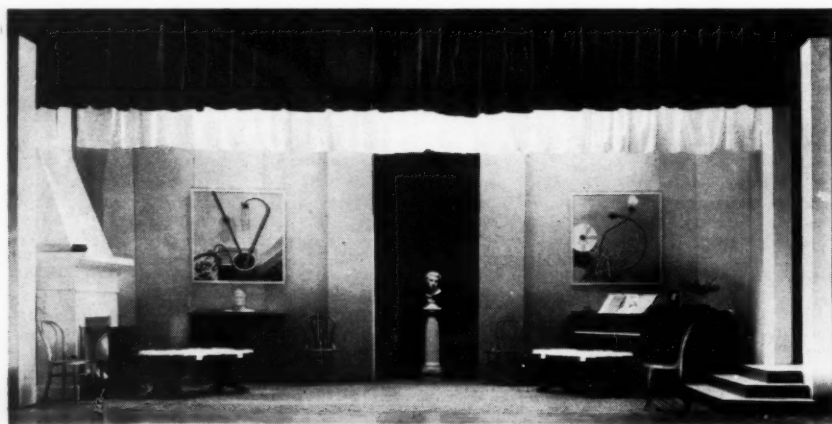
"Tony," whom she left in a proper finishing school, is now section manager of four months' experience in Lehman's department store. Margaret, whose arranged engagement to the Governor's son has been published, has had the temerity to break it off and to fall in love with Michael Young, a "nobody" who has been a protege of Grandma's. Dan, besides having become enamoured of a young Cuban beauty, has become involved in a more than usually serious business scrape.

It looks as though the obdurate old lady is beaten in her plans until a crisis in Dan's financial schemes forces soft-hearted Margaret to acquiesce in the social marriage in order to save him. Michael is crushed by the blow, and disappears.

To the rescue, in her harum-scarum way, comes "Tony," but she herself gets the greatest surprise in the process. Suffice it to say that Grandma gets her foothold in the Governor's mansion, but with happiness for everyone.

Having some idea of the story, let us turn our attention to the characters and their costumes. We know that Act I is late October in New England and it is evening. Summery clothes will be out of keeping. Margaret Ellsworth is 24 and distinguished looking. She has dark hair. She could wear a dark blue dress with narrow white trim. She would be extremely neat in appearance. Dan, her brother, is 26. He is of good height. He is in a dark business suit which could be of blue serge. Tony, the younger sister, who is fair-haired and high-spirited is 17. She could be wearing a combination of tans and browns. Naturally, if it were easier to find a fair-haired Margaret and a dark-haired Tony, there would be no objection to it and they could simply shift color schemes. It all would depend upon the talent trying for parts. I do think Tony should be the shorter of the two girls. George Ellsworth is a quiet, mild-looking man of 55. He would be very well tailored. He could wear a pin-striped medium gray suit, dove gray spats, gray gloves and a cane. His top-coat would be oxford gray or dark blue. He would wear a well-trimmed goatee. Mrs. Ellsworth is 78, white-haired which could be silvered with silver powder. She would be heavily wrinkled and would wear a black velvet ribbon around her neck. She should be erect and alert, however. Since she is returning from a trip, she could have a coat of dark blue or gray. She could wear a blue, gray or purple hat. Her dress could be gray or lavender. It could be blue also.

Philip Ellsworth is a prosperous-look-



Stage set for the Eveleth Junior College production of *BOSTON BLUES*. Designed and executed by Donald Woods.



Scene from the high school premiere production of Aurania Rouverol's new play, *YOUNG APRIL*, given by Mr. Howard H. Palmer at the San Bernardino, Calif., Senior High School (Thespian Troupe No. 148). Miss Rouverol was present to witness the performance.

ing business man of 45. He is the Beau Brummel of the family. His suit could be a rich brown; he could wear a top-coat in tweed or it could be a deep tan broadcloth. He would have an ensemble effect. His shirt would be another shade of tan or brown or it could be a contrasted color. His costume should give the effect of its having been studied. Dr. Alywood is the family clergyman. He would wear the usual clerical costume. His coat and hat would be conservative: blue, black or gray. Michael Young is tall and loosely knit. He is serious-minded and seems older than his 32 years of age. He has a slight limp. His clothes would fit him more carelessly than the clothes of the other men. He could wear oxford gray with a rusty green hat and top-coat. Clifford Haines is large, blond, athletic. He should be very personable. He has money and should be well groomed. I'd suggest that his suit could be a dark tan or it might be a dark green. His top-coat could be dark tan, and he could wear a brown hat, particularly if his suit were dark green.

Since the next scene is the next morning, I believe the women would be dressed in clothes suitable to the hour which is nine o'clock. The men could change suits if they wished. In men's clothes there is so much less choice that I should suggest a simple costume plot for this play and let the men repeat suits but change shirts and ties. The time element has something to do with this suggestion also. It is only next morning. It is true that the family has wealth, but too much authentic detail becomes a burden. It might be wise to do away with top-coats and the like and have all outdoor costumes removed in imagination in a ha'll. I think this would simplify matters a lot. However, a maid could serve and allow these costumes to be seen. I believe that the women will have to have a change of costume. Mrs. Ellsworth

could be in a green morning dress. Tony could now appear in a light blue and Margaret in a deep shade of olive green. In this scene a new character is introduced. She is Rita, the Cuban girl. She is dark. She is in her early twenties. Her dress could be a deep burnt orange or ruby red. She could wear a suit arrangement. The maid all through the play should wear a uniform in black trimmed in white or a uniform in blue trimmed in white.

Act II, Scene 2 takes place in the late afternoon two days later. Personally, I'd keep the men in their same costumes and move the women back into Act I costumes. If you have a cast which can get many costumes easily, then you can change here again. Of course, variety makes a play more interesting.

In this act, Cora, the brawny Irish cook, is introduced. She should be padded. Her costume should be a white uniform with the white cap and apron. The apron and cap could be a color. Tim Rooney is also introduced in this act. He is dark and should be handsome. Tony calls him stunning. He should be athletic. I'd have him dressed more flashily in checks or stripes. I wouldn't overdo his costume.

Act III is two weeks later in the afternoon. It might be wise to change the costumes of the women, but it need not be necessary. In this act M. Duval is introduced. He is a French male dressmaker. He should be very slight or very fat. If he is slight, I'd have him tall; if he is fat, I'd have him very short. In any case, he should be dressed faultlessly. I see him in a dark suit, spats, an eyeglass and wearing a waxed mustache. If he wears a top-coat and hat, they should be dark. The coat should be tight fitting and the hat a derby or soft-brimmed felt. He could wear a diamond on his little finger.

He could wear a dove gray vest and have a wide flowing tie. He would have sideburns and his gait would be mincing.

This costume discussion is not complete in every detail. I feel that every director can get along very nicely with some suggestions as starters. I feel these suggestions should not prove arbitrary. Your talent and your resources must always be considered. I do plead for variety if possible. The same color can be worn on the stage at the same time if the director will remember scenes and actor relationships. Shades of the same color lend variety and can work most harmoniously together. Yet a daring contrast is good in many cases. I have not mentioned pink in my discussion but it could be used by the girls. I suggest an early costume conference and rehearsal. In that way available costumes can be adapted to the needs of the play and to the particular circumstances. My discussion is only given as a lead to the director or mistress of costumes.

One last word about Row, Peterson plays and this play in particular. The play books from the company are valuable to beginning directors because of the many suggestions given in them. In this play the scene changes suggested for cutting the smoking and wine scenes are very good. I like this play because the parts are so varied. There is one teen character, five characters in their twenties, one character in his thirties, two characters in their forties, two characters in their fifties, and one character is in her seventies. The ages of the maid and cook are not given. The taxi driver can be cut. Besides the usual run of characters there are a maid, a cook, two Irish characters, a French character and a Cuban. See what possibilities this variety makes for the make-up people. You may lament these facts as a weakness of the play. I say they make the play a far more fascinating project. You will have fun with *Boston Blues*.

Motion Picture Appreciation

Edited by HAROLD TURNEY*

Chairman, Department of Drama, Los Angeles City College.

OUR TOWN

Film Version of the Pulitzer Prize Play
by Thornton Wilder

THE reason for greatness in literature is its universality, its applicability to the lives of all the peoples of the world. Such a quality has the story of *Our Town*.

Produced on the stage without scenery or properties, the play has been performed in New York and over the country by professional, community, amateur, and collegiate companies for the past season. Its overwhelming success was not due alone, however, to the novelty of its presentation, but more to its underlying theme that there is majesty in simplicity, that the greatest drama of all drama is Life.

In bringing *Our Town* to the screen, the producer, Mr. Sol Lesser, used the vast resources of cinematography to make it into a beautiful motion picture. He assigned the direction to Mr. Sam Wood, who had directed previously *Goodbye Mr. Chips* and signed such players as Thomas Mitchell, Fay Bainter, Beulah Bondi, William Holden, Martha Scott, Guy Kibbee, Stuart Erwin, and Frank Craven to create the fascinating Wilder characters.

Realizing that the success of *Our Town* on the stage was due to the fact that "the

CASTING CREDITS

Frank Craven as the Narrator

Dr. Gibbs.....	Thomas Mitchell
Mrs. Gibbs.....	Fay Bainter
George Gibbs.....	William Holden
Rebecca Gibbs.....	Ruth Toby
Editor Webb.....	Guy Kibbee
Mrs. Webb.....	Beulah Bondi
Emily Webb.....	Martha Scott
Wally Webb.....	Douglas Garidner
Howie Newsome.....	Stuart Erwin
Mrs. Soames.....	Doro Merande
Professor Willett.....	Arthur Allen

play's the thing" rather than to its lack of scenery, Mr. Lesser secured the services of Mr. William Cameron Menzies, art director of *Gone With the Wind*, as production designer, and Mr. Bert Glennon, noted cinematographer of *Hurricane*, *Stage Coach*, *Drums Along the Mohawk*, *Swanee River*, and *Young Mr. Lincoln*, as director of photography.

Production Designed Previously

DURING the period of negotiating for the rights to film *Our Town*, production designing was comparatively new in Hollywood. Only in the past few years have certain outstanding producers realized that a visual script was as necessary as a written scenario in the making of a film. One of these pioneers was Mr.

Lesser, and *Our Town* is the first production in which every scene had been sketched previously, every camera angle determined before the photographer gave the initial order to "roll 'em."

When Mr. Lesser purchased the film rights to *Our Town* for \$45,000, there was considerable speculation as to the feasibility of photographing a stage play which had depended almost entirely upon the imagination of an audience in visualizing the backgrounds of the action. Mr. Harry Horner, a young New York stage designer and artist, provided the first suggestion of an answer. He executed a series of rough sketches in the mood of production. Then Mr. Menzies followed with 1200 background, action, and camera angle drawings, transplanting the story from the bare stage to a series of realistic settings without losing the flavor of the original Wilder play.

Changes in the Story

MEANWHILE, the unusual drama was being adapted to the screen. Of necessity, certain changes had to be accomplished, but with the full approval of the author, Mr. Thornton Wilder. As a matter of fact, Mr. Wilder suggested most of the revisions, even urging the producer to make more drastic ones.

The major change had to do with the narrator, interpreted by Mr. Frank Craven, both on the stage and on the screen. In the play, Mr. Craven was the "stage manager." He came out on an empty stage set with a table and some chairs, then moved over to the proscenium arch, leaned against it and told the audience what the play was all about. Because he was the stage manager, he had a reason for being there—had a reason for knowing what was happening to the characters.

In a film, however, one cannot utilize a stage manager as a narrator. Therefore, in the first script, Mr. Craven was cast as the druggist of Grover's Corners, New Hampshire. An opening scene showed him in his drugstore placing a jigsaw puzzle of New Hampshire together, talking as he fitted the pieces into the puzzle. In subsequent scenes he appeared to tell the audience what had happened, what was happening, and what was going to happen.

But . . . "it won't work," said Director Wood. "The character is a town gossip. He lacks force. There is no reason for him."

So after considerable discussion, the staff took the drug store away from Mr. Craven and gave him a sort of omnipotence, made him an "out-of-nowhere" man. The first scene shows him coming over the crest of a hill, climbing over a rail fence, then walking across a field and bridge. It is night and below can be seen



Moonlight, romance, gossip and beauty are all part of this charming scene from *Our Town*. William Holden and Martha Scott, in the windows, are thinking of moonlight and romance; the three towns-ladies at the gate, as played by Fay Bainter, Beulah Bondi and Doro Merande, are just back from choir practice and pause to gossip a bit before going into their homes.

* Author of *How Cartoons Are Made*, *An Analysis of Dramatic Construction*, *Direction*, and *Film Guides to Abe Lincoln in Illinois*, *The Blue Bird*, *Geronimo*, *Swanee River*, *The Great Victor Herbert*, *Gulliver's Travels*, *Swiss Family Robinson*, *Little Old New York*, *Light That Failed*, and other motion picture study plans.

the lights of a small town. He motions toward it, faces the camera, and starts talking. His dialogue is the same as the dialogue of the play.

"That's Grover's Corners. Nice town," he says. "Nobody very remarkable ever came out of it, so far as we know, but there's lots of human interest, lots of things that we know everybody's going to be interested in." Then he looks back and remembers the town as it was in 1901, takes the audience down the hill into the past to see a day in the lives of the Gibbs and the Webb families.

The day starts with a birth, and ends that evening with choir practice at the Presbyterian church. Its events present a hint of the joys and tragedies that are to follow through the years.

Again Mr. Craven appears, this time to tell the audience the love story of Emily and George in the year 1906. Whimsically, he tells of their rapture, then the scene shifts to the boy and girl. Out of a misunderstanding comes the knowledge that they were meant for each other. Then the scene changes and Mr. Craven takes the audience into the church where Emily and George are being married.

The story is climaxed by one of the most interesting sequences ever placed on film. It is night, a night in 1913. Mr. Craven walks through the dark toward a farmhouse and points to the lighted windows. A fight for life is being waged upstairs. Emily, in childbirth, hovers between life and death. Then the camera becomes Emily's mind, moves into a strange half-world of shadowy unreality, where the dead live again, where the past is the present, and where time has no meaning. The cry of the new-born child brings back reality.

As all great drama should, *Our Town* ends as it started. Mr. Craven climbs a hill, looks down at the sleeping village. "Eleven o'clock in Grover's Corners," he says. "Everybody's resting. Tomorrow's going to be another day. You get a good rest, too. Goodnight." He turns, and whistling as he walks, goes down over the brow of the hill directly beyond the far fence.

Topics and Questions

1. Read Thornton Wilder's two experimental one-act plays, *A Happy Journey* and *Pullman Car Hiawatha*. These were written by the dramatist previous to *Our Town* and resulted in the inspiration for the longer play. Point out the similarities. Contrast the duplicating characters, situations, and ideas. Discuss the distinctive contributions to our modern theatre. Are you able to trace any of these to an earlier period of dramatic production?

2. Carefully study the stage play, *Our Town*, by Thornton Wilder. Enumerate the similarities and differences between the stage and screen versions. Can you determine the logical reasons for the changes?

3. Discuss the use of pantomime in acting. In this respect, contrast the two versions. Which is the more enjoyable? Why?

4. Describe Mr. Wilder's inclusion of the stage manager in the original version, and Mr. Morgan, the narrator in the screenplay, as an external expository device. Does this unusual character tend to break down the fourth wall?



A cold morning in Grover's Corners but Milkman Howie Newsome and Editor Webb pause a moment to say "hello."

When does he enter the action? Is this logical and acceptable? What makes the device entirely satisfactory to an audience? Does it increase a vicarious enjoyment in the presentation? Point out earlier similar characters in Greek, Elizabethan, and modern drama.

5. How do the stage and screen versions achieve a happy ending? Which is the more agreeable. Why?

6. State the theme in your own words. How is it projected to the audience in the stage play? in the screenplay?

7. Point out the advantages of the screen over the stage, using *Our Town* as the model.

8. In both versions, describe the use of music and sound effects. Are they properly motivated by the story, the situations and/or the dialogue?

9. Discuss the methods of projecting the story by flash backs, by short episodes interrupted by the narrator, and by exposition.

10. From the film, describe and discuss the use of technical devices to enhance the narration: trucking and panning shots, long and close-up shots, dissolves, montage, and camera angles; methods of blending the expository units, story scenes, and fantastic episodes; the lighting.

Production Paragraphs

On the stage, *Our Town* was presented without scenery or properties. There were thirty-eight sets in the picture. The properties included forty-eight umbrellas, two coffee grinders, an old fashioned milk measure, two butter molds, a skeleton for the doctor's office, two hand pumps, and twenty-three oil lamps.

PRODUCING CREDITS

Directed by Sam Wood

Screenplay by Thornton Wilder,

Frank Craven and Harry Chandler

Production Designed by

William Cameron Mezies

Direction of Photography by

Bert Glennon, A. S. C.

Produced by Sol Lesser for release through United Artists

Mr. Lesser paid \$45,000 to Thornton Wilder for the screen rights to the Pulitzer prize play. With *Our Town*, Mr. Wilder won his second Pulitzer prize. His first was for the novel, *The Bridge of San Luis Rey*. Before the script was completed, the duo exchanged forty-one letters and eighteen telegrams.

The picture took seven weeks to film. Director Sam Wood rehearsed not only the principals, but the camera as well, before each scene.

Miss Martha Scott played Emily as a fourteen year old girl with no make-up at all. The illusion of extreme youth was given by a change of voice, youthful clothes, and hairdress.

In the wedding scene, Mr. William Holden and Miss Scott were married nineteen times. In this scene, Miss Scott received her first screen kiss. She was kissed nineteen times in one day.

For the opening sequence, Mr. Frank Craven, the narrator, walked eight miles in front of the camera. He only appeared in two shots with other players—one with Miss Scott and Mr. Holden, the other with a bit player.

More than a score of girls were tested for the role of Emily before Miss Scott, who originated the part on the New York stage, won it. At first the producer refused to consider her because the only test available was a poor one made at another studio. Not until a new test was photographed by Cinematographer Bert Glennon did Miss Scott get a contract. Glennon is an ex-film director with seven features and forty shorts to his credit.

The Technical Director's Page

by LESLIE ALLEN JONES

Lecturer, Extension Division, Brown University, Providence, R. I.

Scenery As Is Scenery

SO THIS is the last issue for the year. It makes me feel like Monday, just before curtain time, when the settings for the play to open that evening were at last complete and the settings for the play to come were not yet started. It is a good time to take stock, this Monday evening, while the ushers seat the house, the actors make up in their quarters, and the stage manager goes on a quiet prow about the setting. The master artist under whom I learned my trade continually told me to beware of that complacent feeling. He said that it marked an artist who was slipping—that a good man would view his settings on Monday evening with a critical eye, with some notes as to how he would do them better next time.

And so, in this last issue of the year, I look back on the articles I have written, the queries I have answered, and I cannot help but wonder if I could have not done better. In fact, I think I can do better next time. In this period of stock taking it occurs to me that perhaps I have been too much occupied with material things—concrete things, like how to build a stone fireplace, how to make a wind machine.

Maybe we should hang up our hammers, wash out our brushes, and find a comfortable seat on an upturned bucket,

to chat awhile of scenery and painting in a larger sense.

Now there have been many books written, many theories expounded, on the proper way to set a stage. Most of them are laughed at ten years after writing. I think this is as it should be, for there is one thing I have learned, it is that it is foolish to be dogmatic in the theatre.

There have been great schools of scene painting and structure, terrible and bitter arguments over the setting of a scene, horrible laughter at the work of men who did the best they knew with the things they had. Styles change in the theatre as in everything else. Look at some snapshots of your friends taken five years ago—what funny coats and hats, and did they really wear skirts like that then? But we don't throw away the idea of wearing coats and hats—and skirts, just because the style has changed in their cut and material.

So it makes me slightly tired when people rush up and say "No scenery, that's the thing—look at these modern plays." The recent production of *Julius Caesar*, without scenery, is an example. When it played Providence, my own town, the radiators running across the back wall of the theatre were painted in aluminum paint. A thing that no doubt surprised them very much. Then, as lights played during the show, their pattern made an

interesting background for the movement of the piece. No scenery?—well, several thousand dollars worth of lights went into that production, and the effect was very good indeed. But that does not make sane the cry to do all plays without scenery. Many plays would not be enhanced by a background pattern of silvered radiators and colored shafts of light.

Space staging is the loose term given to define the art of staging plays in pools of light on a darkened stage. It is the god-send of the amateur who hasn't the money, the ability, or the equipment to do staging in any other way. Unfortunately the outfit so handicapped is generally without the lighting facilities to do a proper job of space staging. There is one college that I know where the popular saying is that no one has yet *seen* a play in the theatre.

Realistic settings are the goal of another tribe who maintain that all is not real is not good. They sort of cause a chuckle when comes the absurdity of real bathroom fixtures visible as a door on stage is opened, or when a bad beard or wig enables one to realize that all is not as it seems.

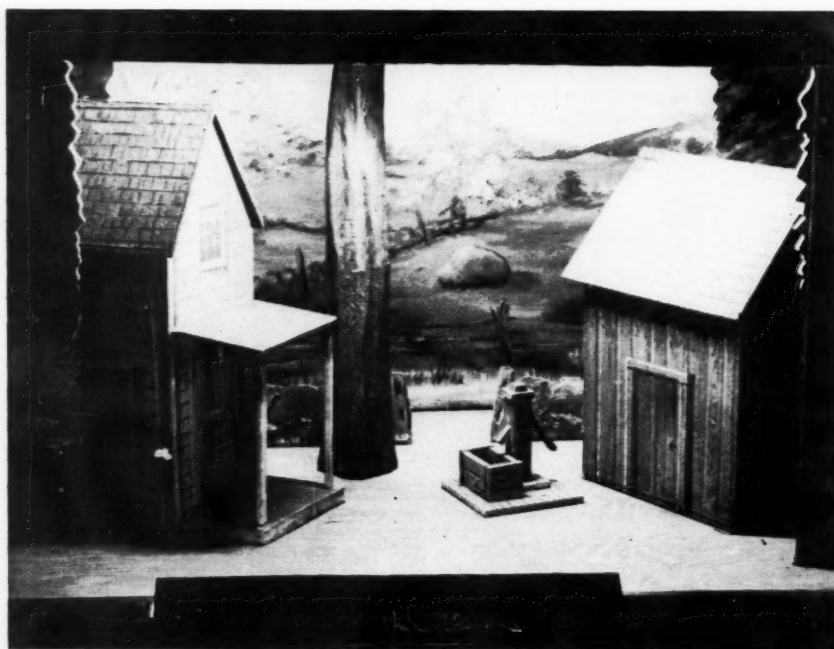
It seems to me that these people—and all people who carry things to excess—fail to realize that the theatre itself is a place of illusion and nothing else. The play is the thing, and the settings should be in keeping with the play. There are many more good *old* plays than there are new dramas—so why build a theatre without a proscenium, or footlights, when the chances are that many old plays written for presentation in the old way, will be played upon the stage?

A place of illusion? That's what I said. I have no patience with these people to say the theatre should present a message—who load their plays with significance and indignation—who try to make of the theatre a pulpit. For me, there is some faint air of degradation in such a method—the bones of the skeleton show through, the joints creak, and the play totters. The good play needs no propping up, no oiling of the joints, it is a thing in itself complete and it does to the audience that rare and wonderful thing which for want of a better word I call theatre.

Theatre is that very scarce quality for which all of us in the theatrical world strive. It is a completion of *illusion*—a single minute, perhaps, in the course of a drama, when scenery, properties, costumes, actors, and audience all combine in an electric moment when all is real in the world of make believe.

I have felt it myself only on a few nights—when I suddenly became aware that you could hear a pin drop in the house—that the actor or actress had them in the hollow of her hand. That this actor or actress was suddenly the person he or she was playing.

It is toward good theatre that we all strive—and good theatre is not a matter of



The Old Homestead. Act. I. A model setting (scale one inch equals one foot) for one of the great rural melodramas. A fine example of the old wing and border setting by Mr. Jones.

scenery, of actors, of make-up and costume. It is a matter of all that go to make up the play being in a proper balance, including the audience. All items are quite unpredictable at times—the audience always so. We try again and again, and sooner or later comes that grand moment—when all is in tune and the coughing and the rustling—the cracks in the scenery, the stain of greasepaint on the collar—all is forgotten and we have that magnificent thing—*theatre!*

To me, good theatre can be helped by good painting. That is only natural, for I am a scenic artist. For others, good painting is a minor detail. That is as it should be, but for a person to state that such and such about the painting is bad (when it is good) because it is not *real*—makes as little sense as the fact that an actor wears greasepaint.

So I give you the illustration on page 20 as an example, by my own hand, of an old fashioned setting. The play—a rural drama of the eighties. The action—improbable, stilted, perhaps laughable today. The scenery—fake, but in the original, not in my model, well painted and honestly done. The result?—well, that play ran for many years, and played to many people. It was evolved slowly and surely as a vehicle for the star, as a means of giving him a chance to show his own talents. It was an honest piece of hokum, if you will, but it was good theatre. It had a magic in it and people laughed and cried.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

“... how to produce the smoke effect at the close of Act I. Every plan that I can think of might be dangerous. Is there something we can get?”—M. H., Ala.

SEEMS like smoke is a bad thing to manage. In the April issue I spoke of smoke at some length. My best advice is don't do it—but if you will, you will—so here is the safest way I know. It smells bad, but there is no danger, as with other chemical mixtures, and coming where the scene does—at the end of the act, it should be possible to air out during intermission.

Get some saltpeter—its about 35c a pound at any drug store—a few ounces will be enough—and soak it in a pan of water. Get as strong a solution as possible. In this solution of saltpeter and water soak some soft cardboard. I use that pressed pulp stuff that comes in egg crates. Let it dry thoroughly, when you should be able to see the white crystals on it. When ready to use, hold in the hand and light with a match. It will smolder, not flame, with a cloud of smoke. Light one corner and drop your piece of cardboard into a bucket that is lodged in a pan or box of sand. This is to save the floor, as the smoldering stuff gets hot. When your effect is over, hook a stick into

NATIONAL THESPIAN PLAYWRITING CONTEST

Manuscripts are now being received for the National Thespian Playwriting Contest, sponsored again this year by The Children's Theatre Press, of Charleston, W. Va. If the winning play is recommended for publication by the judges, the playwright will receive a silver loving cup, and his play will be known as the Thespian Play of the Year.

The contest closes May 30, 1940. For further details write The Contest Editor, The Children's Theatre Press.

a corner of your box or the handle of the pan and drag out of the way—smothering the smoke with a large handful of sand. A man with a fan can send rolls of smoke into your setting. Experiment a bit, so that you do not set off too much cardboard too soon. The smoke is acrid, but the method is very safe.

“We have rather a small stage and have overhead lights and footlights. We desire some specific lighting for about thirty or forty dollars. Would you please give us some advice on this matter?”—E. N., S. D.

I HAVE a friend who is much interested in amateur theatricals. He is a member of a good organization that has spent thousands of dollars on its electrical equipment alone. He and I often have happy arguments over the question of lighting, and we have talked over this request from E. N. of South Dakota without actually coming to blows. I maintain and in my contention am backed by many big men in the theatre, that lighting has run away from the place it should hold in staging a production. An English director, who lighted my settings to a higher degree of realism than I had ever seen them before, remarked that “you Americans use seventy-five percent too much light.” That may be stretching things a bit, but by and large, I think he is right.

All these ranks of baby spots, all these batteries of special effect machines, are part and parcel of an attempt to light the stage with an intensity of light that is hard on the eyes, to say the least. “Highlight the action” cry the directors, and the domestic scene glitters like a musical comedy. A light on the stairs, another in the alcove—nowhere is a soft shadow permitted to remain. Boo to the lot, say I, let's have that dimmer handle down!

Now I don't hold with salt water dimmers made in tubs or pots—considering such things dangerous and makeshift—but I do think thirty or forty dollars can best be expended by adding lengths of cable, sockets, asbestos covered wire and lamps to the stock of the electrician.

My friend would tell E. N. to buy one baby spot, or a flood lamp, or an extra dimmer, or a lone range spot. Never mind the equipment that could be worked into something by the electrician, he would shout—blow fuses, like as not. And right here is where I have him frothing at the mouth—I ask him innocently

if he remembers the expensive lighting flasher he had our college organization buy once upon a time. It blew fuse after fuse, and finally required an expensive transformer and dimmer unit to take the shock of the load. Then the wire netting on the front of the machine made a regular pattern on the back drop—and finally an old stage electrician made us a flasher from an old file and a carbon stick that worked beautifully.

My friend and I agree on one thing—that only an electrician should attempt to wire a homemade piece of equipment.

But if I had thirty or forty dollars to spend, E. N. I would not buy one flood lamp and twenty-five feet of cable. I would buy cable and sockets, and tin and bolts, and cutters and stovepipe—and I'd hunt up old tin cans, dishpans and the like until I had made myself two or three floods for the price of one.

A very good flood is made by mounting a mogul socket to take the 1000 watt lamp in the end of an old bread box. The cover, cut out, makes a good gelatine frame. The base, I saw a good base once made from half of a Model T Ford rear axle housing. And if I am not much mistaken, the axle itself was doing duty as a telescoping rod supporting the bread box.

You will find articles on home made lighting equipment in my page of the November-December issue of the THESPIAN for 1937. There is a good article on lighting in the September-October issue for the same year.

“... painting interior reflecting surface of floodlights, etc. Which do you advise, silver or white?”—M. T., Neb.

White. That color reflects about 80% of light, as against a much smaller percentage of reflection from silver radiator paint. A flat white will reflect about 50% of light, an enamel white 70 to 80%.

It is hard to paint tin surfaces with a paint that will stay on. A good trick is to wash the tin with a rag dipped in vinegar—this seems to cut the grease that is always present on new tin. Then use white enamel, quickly. A flat white, not so expensive, and easier to care for, is made of dry zinc white and glue—can readily be washed off and repainted once a season.

“... what do you think of spray painting for scenery . . .”—L. K., Maine.

FOR many years, when painting professionally I used an airbrush, or spray gun. For stenciling, running shadows, or mottled effects it was ideal. But I have vet to see the gun that will paint scenery—an attempt to cover surface with such a spray gun is defeated by the paint itself—it mostly blows into the air. No pressure gun works successfully with scene paint. A suction type works well if the paint is carried in a small jar on the gun itself. Through a suction hose it will always clog. For some effects then, a gun is O. K. By and large it is not worth the expense.



Scene from the production of *GROWING PAINS* as given by members of Thespian Troupe No. 384 at Custer, So. Dak., High School. Directed by Miss Eva Nelson.

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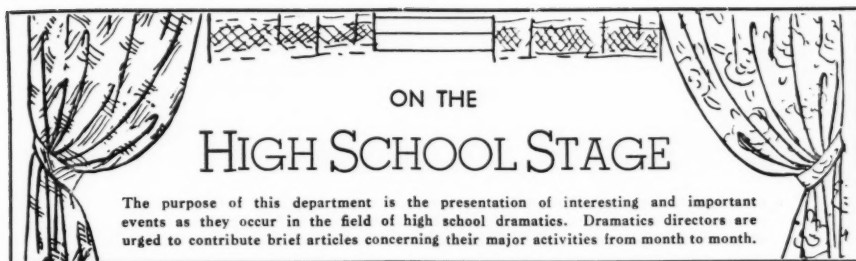
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The purpose of this department is the presentation of interesting and important events as they occur in the field of high school dramatics. Dramatics directors are urged to contribute brief articles concerning their major activities from month to month.

Athens, Ohio

The first annual Southeastern Ohio High School Drama Festival, sponsored by The National Thespian Society, with the cooperation of the Dramatic Arts Department of Ohio University, was held here on Saturday, April 13. Schools entered in the event included Marietta, Greenfield, and Oak Hill. Thespians from Troupe No. 264 of Parkersburg, W. Va., High School presented a guest performance as a part of the festival. Dr. Robert G. Dawes, under whose directorship the premiere of John Erskine's *Henry Disarms* will be given on April 24, 25, directed the festival.

Cannelton, Ind.

You Can't Take It With You, a presentation of Thespian Troupe No. 255, at Cannelton High School, was given February 9, with Miss Mildred Rush directing. *Through the Keyhole*, a three-act comedy, will be presented on April 26.

Morgantown, W. Va.

The tenth annual West Virginia High School Drama Festival sponsored by The National Thespian Society, was held in Commencement Hall, West Virginia University, on Friday and Saturday, April 5, 6. Over five hundred Thespians and directors from high schools of the state were present for the celebration. Plays were presented by the high school troupes from Morgantown, Fairview, Masontown, Philippi, Ripley, Weston, Parkersburg, Gauley Bridge, Alderson, Wayne County, Welch, Williamson, and Sistersville. Ernest Bavely presided as State Festival Chairman, while James B. Lowther of West Virginia University was festival director.

Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio

To Cuyahoga Falls High School goes the honor of having given a performance of *What a Life* on the first day it was released for amateur production in Ohio. The play was successfully staged on January 15, 16, with Mrs. Kathryn Wyre directing. Other activities for the present semester have included an evening of one-acts on March 12 (*First Dress Suit*, *Red Carnation*, *Vane Effort*, and *A Unicorn and a Fish*), the full-length play, *A Quiet Little Place*, given on April 9, and an intra-school play contest scheduled for April 23, 24, 25, with the following plays scheduled: *Good Neighbors*, *For Distinguished Service*, *Small Town Girl*, *Happy Journey*, *Back of the Yards*, and *Elmer*, and the production of *You Can't Take It With You*, to be given on May 28, 29.

Searcy, Ark.

At an effective candlelight service Saturday evening, March 16, at Searcy High School, nineteen students formed the charter roll of Troupe No. 340 of The National Thespian Society, with Miss Marguerite Pearce as Troupe Sponsor. Assisting Miss Pearce with the installation ceremony were Mrs. L. P. Myers and Miss Dorothy Dellinger, members of the high school faculty. The happy occasion was celebrated with a formal banquet at the Mayfair Hotel immediately after the installation. Miss Pearce is an officer in the Arkansas Speech Association and is an active leader in speech and dramatics activities in the state. A bright future is predicted for Troupe No. 340.

Easton, Pa.

One-act plays, quizzo programs, pantomimes, and monologues are being presented regularly at the meetings of the dramatics club (Thespian Troupe No. 247) at Wilson High School, under the sponsorship of Mrs. John Austen. A special program this year featured the performance of the one-act, *Stalled*, written and directed by Pearl Korman, Troupe President. One-acts given for school assembly programs have included *All Fair*, *The Maid that Answered Back*, and *Hick Town Debutants*, the latter two being written and directed by Pearl Korman. The annual senior class play, *The Patsy*, was staged on March 8 and 9 under the joint direction of Miss Anne Moyer and Mrs. John Austen. Another major activity of this semester will be the production of the operetta, *The Old Fashion Charm*, on May 10, 11. The operetta will be produced with the assistance of the Music Department, with Mr. Paul W. Filer directing. — Betty Aaron, Secretary.

Clarksburg, W. Va.

Under the direction of Miss Lillie Mae Bauer, sponsor for Troupe No. 226, at Washington Irving High School and Regional Director for West Virginia, a series of state-wide radio programs were sponsored during National Drama Week early in February, with several Thespian Troupes appearing on the broadcasts. On February 5 the series of programs opened with speeches given by the presidents of the Thespian Troupes of Victory High School, Roosevelt-Wilson High School and St. Marys High School, all of Clarksburg. The next day, February 6, the program originated from the high school at Charleston, West Virginia, (Troupe No. 200) with Mr. Lawrence W. Smith in charge. Central High School of Parkersburg (Troupe No. 262) followed on the third day with the presentation of a one-act play. Huntington High School (Troupe No. 295) was also scheduled to present a program for the fourth day of the broadcasts but due to conflicts the program was presented locally and not over the state-wide hook-up. Members of Thespian Troupe No. 226, under Miss Bauer's direction closed the week's programs with the broadcast of a scene from *The Importance of Being Earnest*.

War, W. Va.

The one-act play, *The Crippled Heart*, was entered by members of Thespian Troupe No. 260 of Big Greek High School in the local Thespian play festival held at this school on March 14. Miss Floy Gamble, who acted as festival chairman, directed the play.



Heights players of Cleveland Heights, Ohio, High School in the production of *SHERWOOD*. Directed by Dr. Dina Rees Evans.

Welcome, New Troupes

We cordially welcome the following schools which have joined the ranks of The National Thespian Dramatic Honor Society since the opening of the present school year last September.

Spanish Fork, Utah, High School, Jayne Evans, sponsor.
 Philippi, W. Va., High School, Ruth Hawkins, sponsor.
 Worthington, Minn., High School, Victor Hackbarth, sponsor.
 Lovington, Ill., Township High School, Lucile Klausner, sponsor.
 Beaumont, Calif., High School, Phyllis Hurst, sponsor.
 Garfield High School, Terre Haute, Ind., Jewell Ferguson, sponsor.
 Miami, Fla., Edison Sr. High School, Willette Vogh, sponsor.
 Oceanside, N. Y., High School, Frances Weaver, sponsor.
 Rainelle, W. Va., High School, Lottie Anne Williams, sponsor.
 Florida State College High School, Tallahassee, Fla., Ralph F. Donaldson, sponsor.
 Messick High School, Memphis, Tenn., Lotty K. McCall, sponsor.
 Field-Kindley Memorial High School, Coffeyville Kans., Lydia Back, sponsor.
 Rupert, Idaho, High School, Martha D. Allen, sponsor.
 Searcy, Ark., High School, Marguerite Pearce, sponsor.
 Toganoxie, Kans., High School, Marion L. Williams, sponsor.
 Atwood, Ill., Township High School, Barbara C. Brice, sponsor.
 Cripple Creek, Colo., High School, Clara G. Hogg, sponsor.
 Canton, Ill., High School, Ethan Allen Snively, sponsor.
 Montrose, Colo., County High School, Louise Bertagnoli, sponsor.
 Custer, S. Dak., High School, Eva Nelson, sponsor.
 Centerville, Iowa, High School, Bernard D. Greeson, sponsor.
 Marietta, Ohio, High School, Lucy A. Stacy, sponsor.
 Orrville, Ohio, High School, P. K. Howells, sponsor.
 Oak Hill, W. Va., High School, Zella C. Bishop, sponsor.
 Plant City, Fla., High School, David E. Bailey, sponsor.
 Greybull, Wyo., High School, Forrest H. Peterson, sponsor.
 Miami Beach, Fla., Senior High School, Muriel Mahoney, sponsor.
 Monrovia-Arcadia-Duarte, Calif., High School, Carolyn K. Doty, sponsor.
 Gadsden High School, Quincy, Fla., Lois Witter, sponsor.
 Buhl, Idaho, High School, William Shively, sponsor.
 Mead, Wash., High School, Dorothy Moore Villa, sponsor.
 Villa Grove, Ill., Township High School, Josephine Allen, sponsor.
 Hammond, Ill., Community High School, H. W. Loy, sponsor.
 Leetonia, Ohio, High School, John C. Converse, sponsor.
 Mineral Ridge, Ohio, High School, Donald L. Barbe, sponsor.
 Edward C. McClain High School, Greenfield, Ohio, Wylie Fetherlin, sponsor.
 Berea, Ky., College Academy, Earl W. Blank, sponsor.
 Clinton, Ind., High School, Margaret McWethy, sponsor.
 Greenville, Miss., High School, Charles Pedrey, sponsor.
 Heights High School, Cleveland Heights, Ohio, Dina Rees Evans, sponsor.

(Continued on page 27)

Custer, S. Dak.

Members of Thespian Troupe No. 384 of Custer High School presented Thespians and members of the Dramatic Class in a program of five one-act plays on February 28, with Miss Eva Nelson, Troupe Sponsor, directing the project. The playbill included *Two Crooks and a Lady*, *Polly Put the Kettle On*, *So Wonderful in White*, *Lima Beans*, and *A Minuet*.

Madison, S. Dak.

Miss Mabel Phelps, Thespian Sponsor at Madison High School, reports the production of several one-act plays this year by students of her department. These were *Household Hints*, directed by Phyllis Nunnemaker; *The Patterson's Dinner*, directed by Vivian Tuynman; *Comin' 'Round the Mountain*, and *Here Comes Aunt Sarah*, directed by Mae McKinney. *Spring Fever* was produced by the Juniors as their Class play of the year.

Cincinnati, Ohio

The Second Annual Southwestern Ohio High School Drama Festival was held in Wilson Auditorium, University of Cincinnati, on April 13, with five schools participating. Entries included *The Women Folks*, given by students from Woodward High School of Cincinnati under the Direction of Mrs. Jessie G. Trinkle, *A Young Man's Fancy*, given by students of Lockland High School under the direction of Miss Ruth Dowden, *The Sun Rises*, presented by Hughes High School of Cincinnati with Miss Erna Kruckemeyer directing. *The Happy Journey*, given by Middletown High School with Miss Florence Powell directing, and *Jacobs Comes Home*, staged by Central High School of Xenia High School under the direction of Miss Virginia N. Free. Dr. Dina Rees Evans was critic judge and gave *The Women Folks* and *A Young Man's Fancy* a rating of "Good," while the other three plays were rated "Superior." The festival was sponsored by The National Thespian Society.

Polson, Mont.

Miss Lillian Grace Brown, sponsor for Thespian Troupe No. 251 at Polson High School, reports a very active Thespian program for this season. The year began early in November with the all-school play *Parents and Pigtales*. In March *June Mad* was given as the Junior Class play. On April 19, members of the Senior Class gave *The Eyes of Tlaloc*. Among the one-acts given this year were *The Bond Between*, *The House of Juke*, and a program consisting of *Spreading the News*, *The New School of Wives* and *When the Sun Rises* presented in observance of National Drama Week.

Thespians played the leading roles in the first radio play presented by the public speaking class. Thespians plan to enter the annual one-act play festival at the University of Montana in May.

Jeanette, Pa.

Twenty-two members were added to the roll of Thespian Troupe No. 304 at Jeanette High School at an impressive initiation banquet held on March 18. The program included a discussion by Dr. Snowden on the value of dramatics. Principal Maclay, Troupe Sponsor Ethel Landgraff, James Cassell, Valetta Krause, Barney Frick, and Paul Stiffey made up the initiation team. An attractive program in the Thespian colors of blue and gold was used for the occasion.

New York City

Over 1,000,000 school children will be afforded an opportunity during the 1940-41 school year to witness a visual production of Columbia's American School of the Air. Casts of adult professional actors will stage several of the air school's plays in repertoire next fall before student audiences in every section of the country.

New Kensington, Pa.

Members of Thespian Troupe No. 14 of the New Kensington High School are completing one of their busiest seasons in recent years. Among the one-act plays given so far this year are *The Great Allowance Battle*, *Murder in Reverse*, *The Undoing of Albert O'Donnell*, *King Sargon's Jars*, *The Christmas That Was Pawned*, *Frank and Erna*, *The Perfect Gift*, *On the Air*, and *The Trysting Place*. A number of guest speakers have addressed Thespian meetings. Thespians also sponsored the Christmas assembly program which provoked many favorable comments. The first major play of the season, *Crazy House*, was given on February 23 under the direction of Miss Ada Fiscus, Troupe Sponsor. The second full-length play, *New Fires*, will be given by the Senior Class in May.—Virginia Bennett, Secretary.

Orlando, Fla.

Roberta Winter's comedy, *The Bridal Chorus*, was performed before a large audience on February 16 by members of Thespian Troupe No. 177 at Orlando Senior High School. The play was directed by Miss Mildred E. Murphy. Thespian Regional Director for the State of Florida. An interesting event of this spring was the Thespian Variety Show given on April 12. The program consisted of three one-act plays given by the high schools from Leesburg, DeLand, and Orlando.



Thespians in the production of *LIFE BEGINS AT SIXTEEN*, given by members of Troupe No. 208 at the Edinburg, Texas, High School. Directed by Miss Louise M. Forrest.

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JUNE 23 — AUGUST 18

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MAY 1940

Wetumpka, Ala.

Miss Margaret Hogan, sponsor for Thespian Troupe No. 125 at Wetumpka High School, reports a very successful production of *Jane Eyre* (adaptation by Wall Spence) on February 28. Miss Hogan writes that her Thespians gave a polished performance in every respect and that the large audience present was highly pleased with the evening's program.

Cincinnati, Ohio

Clifford Goldsmith's popular comedy, *What a Life*, was given on March 8, 9, by the Little Playhouse Company of the Schuster-Martin School of the Drama, with Mr. William Dawes directing. A number of high school groups from nearby communities saw the performances which included Dan Denton in the role of Henry Aldrich, Harold Arthur as Mr. Bradley, Alma Rita Kvilius as Miss Shea, and Philip Albright as Mr. Patterson.

Fairmont, Minn.

Giants in the Earth, an adaptation of Rolvaag's novel, was presented as their fall play by members of Thespian Troupe No. 261 at the Fairmont High School, with Mrs. Howard Webb, directing the play. The production was featured by a splendid performance by Marcella Meyer in the role of Beret. Several interesting sound effects were produced for the production. Earlier in the fall an assembly program consisting of scenes from some of Shakespeare's plays was given. With the return of Miss Caryl Meyer, Troupe Sponsor, who was ill during the early part of the season, Thespians opened the spring semester with the presentation of the play, *The Echo*, given in February in observance of National Drama Week. Members of the dramatics club presented an evening of one-acts this spring. The major dramatics activities of the year came to a close on April 12 with the production of the Senior Class play, *Our Town*, under the direction of Miss Meyer.

Edinburg, Texas

Life Begins at Sixteen, given on December 15 by the Junior Class, was the first long play of the present season at Edinburg High School (Thespian Troupe No. 208) with Miss Louise Forrest directing. Students of this school participated in the play festival sponsored by the Edinburg Junior College on November 20th. The program for this spring includes the production of the Senior Class play, *The Patsy*, the preparation of the Interscholastic League Contest play, *Model Behavior*, and the melodrama, *She Was Only a Farmer's Daughter*, given by members of the Thespian and Dramatics Clubs. With a larger Thespian membership this year, the Troupe is able to sponsor several additional dramatics projects, with a number of subjects pertaining to dramatics being studied at the dramatics club meetings which are held regularly.

Hendersonville, N. C.

Ladies in Waiting was presented with great success during the fall semester at the Fassen School for Girls (Thespian Troupe No. 145), according to a report from Miss Dorothea R. Stadelman, Troupe Sponsor. One of the major dramatics events of the spring semester was the production on April 13, of three one-act plays, *Be a Little Cuckoo*, *The Ghost in the Green Gown*, and *Polly Put the Kettle On*. —Claire Cox, Troupe Secretary.

Wayne, Nebr.

The Junior Class play, *I'll Leave It to You*, by Noel Coward, was given on February 8 as the first major play of this season at Wayne High School (Thespian Troupe No. 48). The production was directed by Miss Beatrice B. Fuller, Troupe Sponsor. Plans were made early this spring for the production of some one-act plays. —Joe W. Simonin, Secretary.

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Mention The High School Thespian



THE FRONT PORCH as given by members of Troupe No. 354 at Penn High School, Greenville Pa. Mrs. C. D. Kearns, director.

Playwrights are invited to submit one-act plays for a forthcoming anthology of non-royalty plays to be published in New York this summer. Childrens' plays, skits, historical plays, comedies, religious plays, camp-plays, and all other types of one-act will be considered. Payment will be made on acceptance. Scripts must be in the editors' hands no later than June 30, 1940. Send all manuscripts to Stephen Moore, c/o The One Act Play Magazine, 105 West 40th Street, New York.

Terre Haute, Ind.

The recently organized Thespian Troupe No. 332, at Garfield High School, with Miss Jewel Ferguson as sponsor, met with its first inspiring success with the production of the play, *Pawnshop Granny*. This play, with Barbara Lenzen in the principal role, was given in the northern division of the Speech Arts Festival and was later given on one of the school assembly programs. Miss Lenzen won recognition with her performance in the Speech Arts Festival. Other activities for this season are being planned by this lively group of Thespians.

Webster Groves, Mo.

Mr. Eugene R. Wood, sponsor for Troupe No. 191, at Webster Groves High School, writes that his ten performances of *What a Life* were highly successful in every respect. A special production of the spring semester was that of the play, *Mollie O'Shaughnessy*, a new play by Dorothy R. Stewart. The play will soon be released by Row, Peterson & Co. Writing of the test production of this play, Mr. Wood says "We found the play very popular with our audiences. The play is an interesting drama of characters and situation, a melodrama of Oregon in early 1900, but not the usual "Wild West" variety. Audiences take the play situations seriously, but enjoy the humor which grows out of the characters and situation. Other plays on this seasons production schedule are *320 College Avenue*, *Life Begins at Sixteen*, *The Ghost of Yankee Doodle*, *Sorority House*, and *Our Town*.

Greenfield, Ohio

Script and direction were in charge of Troupe Sponsor Wylie Fetherlin for the McClain High School Minstrel Show, given on March 14, with the Speech Arts and Music Departments cooperating. A "melodrammer" entitled *Clinic Cutups* was a feature of the evening's entertainment.

Indianapolis, Ind.

Staged in seventeen scenes, Shakespeare's classic, *As You Like It*, was produced by members of Thespian Troupe No. 21, at Ben Davis High School, with Mrs. Elsie B. Ball directing. A large cast and several committees on the production staff featured the performance which proved very successful. Fred Tillett was stage production manager, while Elva Strouse was responsible for the stage scenery.

Thompson Falls, Mont.

Special lighting and sound effects were used for the production of *Tiger House*, staged early in the season by members of Thespian Troupe No. 270, at Thompson Falls High School. Thespian activities began with a special program for new members given on October 17. Thespians gave the one-act play, *Come, Let Us Adore Him*, as a special program for Christmas. An unusual event of the spring semester was the production of the plays, *The Winner* and *Si, Si, Senorita*, given in Penthouse or "intimate theatre" style. Thespians plan to enter the State Little Theatre Festival to be held in Missoula, Montana, early in May.

Plant City, Fla.

Under the leadership of Mr. David E. Bailey, Troupe No. 389, at Plant City High School, has enjoyed an active season since last fall when the troupe was established with twenty-three students forming the charter roll. The troupe was formally installed on November 27, at an impressive ceremony held before the entire student body. Mr. Bailey and Troupe officers spoke during the course of the ceremony. Thespians began their activities with a special program for Armistice Day. Early in January, Thespians presented the one-act, *Three's a Crowd*, before a packed house, with the result that an attractive sum of money was raised to purchase stage scenery. The major play of the season, *Jo's Boys*, was given late in March. Unusual interest was attached to this performance for the reason that Miss Alma Johnson, a speech instructor at Florida Southern College, who adapted the play from Louisa May Alcott's books of the same name, chose the players for the cast and was present at the performance. The season will close with the production of the annual class plays in which Thespians will take an active part. Mr. Bailey reports that the event of the year will be a Thespian banquet which will be held after all plays have been given.

Tarkio, Mo.

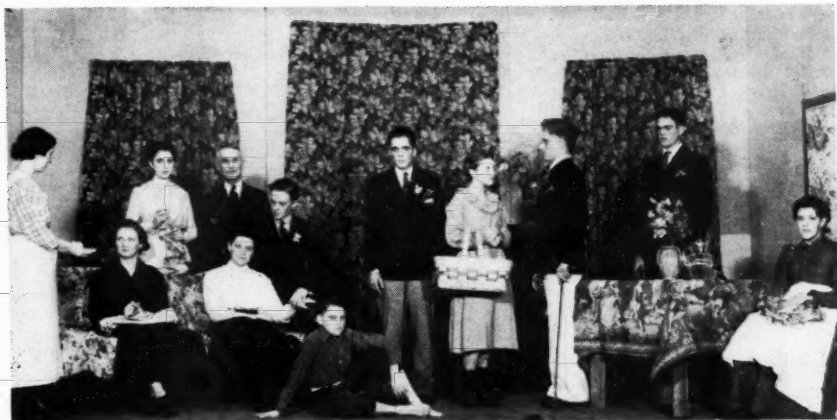
Superior rating was awarded to the high schools of Hamburg, Iowa, and Hopkins and Maryville, Mo., for their productions of *Jacob Comes Home*, *A Star Fell From Heaven*, and *Search Me*, respectively, at the Tarkio College Speech Festival, held on March 1. Other schools participating in the festival, with their entries, were as follows: (Missouri) Tarkio, *The Patchwork Quilt*, Horace Mann (Maryville), *Hog Business*, Quitman, *In Doubt About Daisy*, Fairfax, *Helena's Husband*; (Iowa) Blockton, *Frank and Erna*, Strahan, *While the Toast Burned*, Tabor, *The Lamp*, Randolph, *Wheat Fire*, Coin, *The Gate*, Corning, *One Egg*, New Market, *Who Gets the Car Tonight*, Yorktown, *The Undoing of Albert O'Donnell*; (Nebraska) Table Rock, *Jeanne d'Arc*. Prof. McDonald W. Held directed the festival.

Mead, Wash.

Eleven members of Thespian Troupe No. 395 had parts in the Senior Class play, *Mignonette*, given under the direction of Mrs. Dorothy Moore Villa, on March 15, at Mead High School. The new public address system was used for the off-stage sound effects. The play was very successful. Thespians produced the following one-acts this spring: *Weinies on Wednesday*, *Who Says Can't*, *There's Always Tomorrow*, and *Green Eyes in the Dark*. Thespians also plan to exchange programs with a neighboring Troupe before the present school year ends.



Stage set for the production of **THREE-CORNERED MOON** at the Burley, Idaho, High School. Mr. E. J. Ryan, director.



Cast on set for the play, *POLLYANNA*, given by members of Thespian Troupe No. 397 at the Hammond, Illinois, Community High School. Directed by Mr. H. W. Loy.

Webster Groves, Mo.

A record of ten performances of Clifford Goldsmith's comedy, *What a Life*, was attained between February 23 and March 9 by the Little Theatre of Webster Groves High School (Thespian Troupe No. 191), with Mr. Eugene R. Wood directing. Walter Semitzsch was stage director.

Postville, Iowa

Since January, 1939, a total of five major dramatic productions have been presented at Postville High School (Thespian Troupe No. 294), under the direction of Miss Pauline Smith. *Hobgoblin House*, a Thespian production, was given in January of the 1938-39 season. Then came the production of an evening of three one-act plays in April, also given by Thespians. In May Thespians sponsored the production of the Senior Class Play, *Once In A Lifetime*. The present season opened with the Junior Class play, *Early to Bed-Early to Rise*, given in October under Thespian sponsorship. A second program consisting of one-acts was presented by Thespians early in March of this spring. Almost a dozen one-act plays have been produced for assembly programs and for other occasions during the past year. The play, *The Finger of God*, was awarded excellent rating in the University of Iowa Play Production Festival last spring. A group of ten students were admitted to Thespian membership early this spring. Leah Harris has been chosen Best Thespian for the first semester of the present season.

East Liverpool, Ohio

Members of the Speech and Dramatics Department at East Liverpool High School (Thespian Troupe No. 319) began their season this year with the presentation of a musical and dramatic program before various local groups in November for the purpose of promoting the annual Red Cross Drive. Miss Kathryn Ogilvie, Troupe Sponsor, writes that the program was very successful. At Christmas, Thespians presented a series of tableaux and pantomimes, with the choral club furnishing appropriate songs. For Boy Scout's Birthday Celebration a radio program was presented with the aid of two microphones at the county meet in Wellsville. Girls of Thespian Troupe No. 319 were responsible for the production of a one-act play before the D. A. R. Washington's Birthday tea, a production which provoked many favorable comments. The last week in March an evening of one-acts was presented, including the plays, *The Blue Teapot*, *Which is the Way to Boston?*, *Station TTTT*, and *A Prayer for our Sons* which was entered in the annual Northeastern Ohio High School Drama Festival at Kent State University on April 12-13.

Deweyville, Texas

The English morality play, *Everyman*, was presented on Easter night by members of the Mask and Wig Club of Deweyville High School, with Mr. John L. Brown directing. The lighting effects and costumes were prepared by members of the drama class of the school. Performances were given at several of the local churches.—Nannine Ruth Perkins, Secretary of Senior Class.

Mount Vernon, Wash.

Troupe No. 207 of the National Thespians in Mount Vernon High School meets the second Wednesday of every month. At the regular meetings, reports are given on the Broadway Theatre and the Northwest Theatre. The spring initiation was held at the first meeting in April and a large group of students were initiated. To celebrate National Drama Week, fifteen members of Troupe No. 207 attended the "Showboat" in Seattle, where *Room Service* was being shown. This theatre is under the supervision of the University of Washington Drama Department. After the play, members of the party went backstage and visited the dressing rooms and inspected the mechanism of the revolving stage, the switchboard, lighting equipment and costume rooms. The alumni of Troupe No. 207 headed the cast of the Mount Vernon Junior College play, *Cross My Heart*, presented December 8. The leads in the all-school play were also Thespians. The name of the play given was *Running Wild*, by Glenn Hughes, director of drama at the University of Washington. It was presented March 1. The world premiere, *Young Adventure*, written by Savage and McRae, was given March 29. Miss Mary Kay Rohrer is the director of the plays and of the local Thespians.—Patsy Cameron, Troupe Secretary.

Welcome, New Troupes

(Continued from page 24)

- Box Elder High School, Brigham City, Utah, John L. Owen, sponsor.
- Zion-Benton Township High School, Zion, Ill., Mary E. Furr, sponsor.
- Unicoi County High School, Erwin, Tenn., Anne Bryant, sponsor.
- Caldwell High School, Caldwell, Idaho, Anabel Anderson, sponsor.
- Galesburg Senior High School, Galesburg, Ill., Paul B. Williams, sponsor.
- Woodland High School, Woodland, Calif., Margaret Hench, sponsor.
- Osage High School, Osage, Iowa, Awanda Mathison, sponsor.

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Drumright, Okla.

Professor, How Could You?, produced jointly by the Dramatics Club and Thespians, with Miss Oneta Maxwell directing, was given on December 14 as the first major play of the present season at Drumright High School. The second long play of the year, *Lavender and Old Lace*, was staged by the Junior Class on March 14. For the observance of National Drama Week, Thespians gave *Love of Pete and Between Dances* late in January. *The Tangled Web* was entered in the drama tournament held on November 17 at Enid, Oklahoma. The second tournament entry of the season, *The Swamp Spirit*, was awarded first place in the contest held at Cushing, Oklahoma, on March 1. Thespians paid for the stage furniture purchased last season, this being one of their major projects this year.—Bette Ann Burton, Secretary.

Michigan City, Ind.

Members of Thespian Troupe No. 91 of Isaac C. Elston Senior High School have spent the greater part of the season reading and studying plays for their production before an all-school assembly program this spring. *Coming Around the Mountain* was given late in December. *The Confessional* is scheduled for production early in May. Miss Nellie Luck was recently assigned the duties of Thespian Troupe Sponsor.—Sara Salmassy, Secretary.

San Bernardino, Calif.

The San Bernardino High School (Thespian Troupe No. 148) has the honor of being the first high school in the United States to produce Aurania Rouverol's latest play, *Young April*. The play was given on January 26 under the direction of Mr. Howard H. Palmer. Miss Rouverol was present for the premiere. Mr. Palmer writes that a repeat performance for the junior high schools was given and enjoyed by both students and adults. A Thespian initiation will be held at this school late in April.

Morgantown, W. Va.

Master Pierre Patelin, given by Thespians of Troupe No. 27 of the Morgantown High School, was chosen to represent the district at the State Festival held at West Virginia University on April 5, 6. The play was directed by Miss Dorothy Stone White. The other two entries in the local festival held on March 14 were *Fixin's*, presented by Thespians of the East Fairmont High School, with Mr. H. T. Leeper directing; and *The End of the Dance*, given by Thespians of the Washington Irving High School, Clarksburg, with Miss Lillie Mae Bauer directing.

Students on the All-Local Festival Cast included Charles Ashton, Stanley Cox, Genevieve Martin, and Eldon Lee, all of Morgantown; Margaret Folk, of Washington Irving High School, and Lois Walters, of East Fairmont.

Alderson, W. Va.

Which Is the Way to Boston? staged by members of Thespian Troupe No. 72, of Alderson High School, with Miss Stella Nelson directing, was awarded the honor of participating in the State Festival at West Virginia University this Spring. Thespians of Bramwell High School

presented *Sparkin'*, with Miss Shirley Foster directing, and Thespians of the Greenbriar High School, Roncerverte, gave *The Game of Chess*, with Miss Lucy M. Yates directing. Those on the All-Local Festival Cast included Bill Boone, of Roncerverte, Alene McMullen and Lawrence Davis, of Bramwell, Charles Fletcher, Florence Smith, and Mary Alderson, of Alderson.

Cheney, Wash.

Activities of Thespian Troupe No. 267, under the sponsorship of Miss Irmal J. Kinneson, at Cheney High School this year have included the production of the one-act play, *Thank You, Doctor*, as part of the Carnival program in November; the sponsorship of the all-school play, *Night of January 16th*, on February 2, and the presentation of the one-act play, *Midnight Fantasy*, given at the Speech Conference of the Inland Empire Association early in April. *June Mad* has been chosen by the Seniors for their class play this Spring. The play will be given on May 3. Miss Kinneson has added several new members to her troupe this spring.

Newport News, Va.

Sponsor of Troupe No. 122 of the National Thespians of the Newport News High School, Miss Dorothy Crane, reported the production of Thornton Wilder's *Our Town* on November 16 and 17. Presentation of such a difficult play as *Our Town* has seldom been undertaken by anyone but professionals and little theatres. Due to the patient and understanding efforts of the entire cast, the result of the play was successful. The annual Christmas program was directed entirely by the students of the Drama Department. The tableaux which were given were very impressive. The graduating seniors presented as their farewell performances two plays, *Theme Song* and *Family Failing*. From the dramatic *Our Town*, Thespians turned to the rollicking, youthful comedy, *What a Life*. One cannot help being touched by the daily life of Henry Aldrich, an average high school student. This was given April 4 and 5. At the reorganization of the Thespian troupe, Bobby Applewhite was elected president; Charles Mayer, vice-president, and Marie Suttle, secretary. At this time thirteen new pledges joined the troupe. For outstanding work in the Drama Department, Charles Mayer was elected first best Thespian and Marie Suttle, second best. Additional pledges were taken in this spring.

War, W. Va.

In the Local Festival held on March 14 at Big Creek High School (Troupe No. 260), *The Dictator Visits His Mother*, given by Thespians of the Williamson High School, with Miss Rose G. Smith directing, was chosen to enter the State Festival. Thespians of Magnolia High School, Matewan, gave *The Maker of Dreams*, directed by Mrs. Kathryn M. Talbert, while Thespians of Troupe No. 260 gave *The Crippled Heart*, directed by Miss Floy Gamble, who also served as Festival Chairman for the occasion. Those on the All-Local Festival Cast included Archie Mullens, Ruth Van Dyke, and Matthew Romeo, of War; Mary Lou Schwachter and Eugene Farris, of Williamson, and Burnis Copley, of Matewan.

Columbus, Ind.

Among the one-act plays given during the current season at Columbus High School (Thespian Troupe No. 57), under the direction of Miss Mildred Murray, were *Moonset*, *The Cornhusk Doll*, *Taps*, *The Sword That Divides*, *Seeing Double*, *The Spider*, and *By Special Request*. Other one-acts, all of which are given before local groups and for assembly programs, are planned for this spring. Because of the large number of one-acts given this season, no long plays will be produced. Thespians participated in the Speech Arts Festival, held at State Teachers' College at Terre Haute, Indiana, in February. Plans were under discussion this spring to exchange programs with members of Thespian Troupe No. 142 of Bloomington High School.

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California, Pa.

Entries in the Third Annual Drama Festival, held at State Teachers' College, California, Pa., on March 9, were as follows: *Sintram of Skagerrack*, California; *The Valiant*, Centerville; *The Wonder Hat*, Donora; *Elmer Cleans Up*, Marion; *The Red Lamp*, Perryopolis; *The First Dress Suit*, Redstone; *Little Oscar*, Uniontown; and *When the Whirlwind Blows*, Brownville. The festival was sponsored jointly by members of Thespian Troupe No. 187 of Brownville Senior High School and students of the drama department of California, Pa., State Teachers' College. Miss Lotta June Miller and Miss Jean E. Donahey were in charge.

Clyde, Ohio

Aunt Letty's Niece was given on March 1 by Thespians and members of the Junior Class at York High School. Miss DeJane Babione directed the production. A second full-length play is tentatively scheduled for production on May 10, to be given by Thespians and members of the Senior Class. The operetta, *The Gypsy Troubadour*, was given on April 5 under the sponsorship of the Glee Clubs and Dramatic Clubs. One-acts given during the season included *He Troups to Conquer* and *The Thinkers*. Programs have also been exchanged with nearby schools this season.—Catherine Yarger, Secretary.

Harlan, Iowa

Miss Minerva and William Green Hill was given on February 22 as their class play by the Juniors of Harlan High School (Thespian Troupe No. 159), with Miss Helen Wyant directing the production. Other activities of the spring semester included an original "Easter Revue" staged by Thespians on March 28. The Seniors have chosen *Jane Eyre* for their class play which will be staged in May.—Norma G. Colburn, Secretary.

Orrville, Ohio

Cross My Heart was given early this spring by the Junior Class of Orrville High School, with Mr. P. K. Howells directing. Lorain Horst was Assistant Director. Troupe No. 387, with Mr. Howells as sponsor, was established at this school this year. A large troupe of students formed the charter roll.

Fair Oaks, Calif.

Troupe No. 289 of San Juan High School initiated ten new members after the production of the Senior play, *Peg O' My Heart*, early this spring. On March 1, Thespians traveled to Stockton, California, to see the production of *Steppin' High*, an original musical comedy by Student Harold Rogers of the College of the Pacific. Early in April, Thespians assisted with the installation of the new troupe at Woodland High School. Major dramatic activities for the season will come to a close on May 3 with the production of the play, *The Ghost Flies South*. Miss Mona Belle Hensch directs dramatics and supervises Thespian activities.—Peggy Penkins, Secretary.

Parkersburg, W. Va.

Mrs. Marja Steadman Fear, of West Virginia University, served as Critic Judge for the district play festival held at Parkersburg, West Virginia, on Friday, March 8. *The Wonder Hat*, given by Thespians of Parkersburg High School, was chosen to enter the State Festival. Other entries in the local festival were Charleston High School, *Still Stands the House*, and Huntington High School, *Goodnight Please*. The entry from Charleston was directed by Mr. Lawrence W. Smith, while that presented by the Thespians of Huntington was directed by Miss Hite Wilson.

Johnstown, Pa.

The first production of Thornton Wilder's *Our Town* by a junior high school was given on March 15 by students of the tenth grade at the Cochran Junior High School of Johnstown, Pa., with Miss Margaret Wilt in charge. Attractive programs were designed for the production.

Burley, Idaho

An exchange program with Heburn High School was one of the important events of this spring for Thespians of Troupe No. 111 at Burley High School. National Drama Week was observed early in February with the production of the one-act, *A Matter of Choice*, and the radio broadcast of a dramatic program entitled *Burley on Parade*. Two performances of *Three-Cornered Moon* were given on February 16, 17. Thespians of this school were also given the honor of conducting the installation for Troupe No. 268 at Rupert High School this spring. All dramatic activities at Burley are directed by Mr. Eugene Ryan.

Polo, Mo.

The Juniors gave the first long play of this season, *High-Pressure Homer*, at Polo High School, with Miss Elizabeth Pinkerton, sponsor for Troupe No. 351, as director. The Senior Class gave the second major play, *Little Woman*, on March 15, the play also being directed by Miss Pinkerton. Drama Week was observed with the production of three one-acts: *Sparkin'*, *Caramels*, and *The March Heir*. Education Week was also observed with a dramatic program entitled "Progress" given by students of the Speech Department.

Wauwatosa, Wis.

John Balderstone's three-act play, *Berkeley Square*, was given to large audiences on February 29 and March 1 by the dramatics department of Wauwatosa High School, with Katharine M. Pratt directing. Costumes were made by Miss Alberta Johnson and Mrs. Stephen Felzo. Barbara Lockerbie was student assistant.

When September Rolls Around

MANY of you will want to be casting about for plays before school opens next September. For that reason we hope to have our 1941 play catalog ready for you by August 1, not for general mailing, but to fill individual requests. In this new catalog we shall list:

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EDITED BY H. T. LEEPER

Review Staff: Donald Woods, Carl Cummings, Kari Natalie Reed, Robert W. Masters, Daniel Turner, Mary Ella Bovee and Virginia Leeper.

Reviews appearing in this department aim to help our readers keep up with recent books and plays. The opinions expressed are those of the reviewer, and mention of a book or play in this department does not necessarily mean that such a publication is recommended by THE HIGH SCHOOL THESPIAN.

Dramatists Play Service, 6 East 39th St., New York City.

Because It's June, by Babette Hughes. Comedy in one act. 2 m., 1 w. Royalty, \$5. Light comedy, in which a serious-minded young college instructor and a wise old college professor disagree on June, romance and canoeing.—Kari Natalie Reed.

Lawyer Lincoln, by Chase Webb and Betty Smith. Comedy in one act. 5 w., 4 m. Royalty, \$5. This play presents a humorous dramatic episode in the life of Abraham Lincoln at the time that Lincoln was a struggling young lawyer. His attempt to turn matrimonial agent is amusing, entertaining, and, of course, successful. The play presents no actual stage difficulties and gives a splendid chance to use costumes, interesting coiffures, crepe hair projects for beards, sideburns and so forth, of the period.—Kari Natalie Reed.

Builder of Christmas Fires, by Melba G. Bastedo, from the story of the same name by Mrs. Fred W. Gage. Christmas play in one act. 2 m., 1 w. A delightful fantasy, better than the average run of Christmas plays. The plot is not at all unusual, but the lines and particularly the artistic possibilities are very good.—Kari Natalie Reed.

Xingu, by Thomas Seller. Authorized dramatization from Edith Wharton's story of the same name. Comedy in one act. 8 w. A good comedy, especially suited for presentation before women's clubs or other women's organizations. The play presents eight modern women at a meeting of their Thursday Afternoon Club on the day when their guest of honor is a popular woman authoress. In their attempt to appear well-informed literarily, they create a rather strained situation until the least favored member, a quick-witted and not too serious-minded young lady, brings up Xingu to the downfall of everyone, including the visiting authoress.—Kari Natalie Reed.

Samuel French, 25 West 45th Street, New York.

Give Us A Break, a comedy in three acts, by Frances Mangin. 3 m., 7 w. Purchase of copies for cast required for first performance; subsequent performances, \$2.50 each. Mrs. Grey determines to give substantial sums of her fortune, with no reservations as to use, to several young people, in order to start them out in life. Her brother, following disagreeable quarrels among the young recipients, shows them, and her, too, that the money must be earned before it can benefit them as she wishes. A lively play, easy to cast and produce.—Virginia Leeper.

Our Town, a play in three acts, by Thornton Wilder. 17 m., 7 w., extras. Royalty on application. This play is a big responsibility for the director, cast and staff. It offers unusual and interesting possibilities for experimentation in effective pantomime, interpretation, lighting and staging. The large and elastic cast provides for the participation of entire groups, where there are many varying degrees of talent. The chance for doubling brings this play within the range of smaller institutions, and the bare stage as a setting is adaptable to small as well as large auditoriums. *Our Town* can be staged with a minimum of effort and expense, but one should not be misled by its apparent simplicity, for it is one of those plays that "grows" with rehearsal. It should not be undertaken by students of immature minds and appreciation,

since its success is so largely dependent upon wide imagination and keen interpretation. The part of the stage manager is vital to its success and should be in the hands of an understanding individual. The presentation of *Our Town*, with its humor, picturesqueness and pathos, set against a New Hampshire background, is excellent theatre and offers a splendid vehicle for the enterprising group.—Mary Ella Bovee.

The King's Messenger, a drama in three acts, by Frederick Jackson. 9 m., 5 w. Royalty, \$25. This is an unusual drama, somewhat reminiscent of *Outward Bound*. Its situations, with appropriate line accompaniment, are splendidly and dramatically presented. The setting is simple enough and its characters varied sufficiently to bring the play within the scope of smaller, less-advanced groups, who wish to rise above the usual farce level. For certain conservative communities, there are parts of the script that would need slight alteration, but this can be accomplished without marring the drama. The play provides ample opportunity for talented youngsters, and it offers, as well, a challenge to the aspiring organization. Its message is especially apropos at this present time of world intrigue and crisis, as the Messenger proves to come, not from a man-made kingdom, but from God.—Mary Ella Bovee.

Freckles, a spirited dramatization of Gene Stratton Porter's most famous novel, by Rose Warner. 6 m., 8 w. Royalty, \$25. Briefly, the story centers around Freckles, an orphaned young man, who arrives at the Duncan homestead, seeking work. His honesty and trustworthiness more than repay Harvey McLean, wealthy lumber mill owner, for his faith in the boy. There are amusing incidents and scenes of pathetic tenderness and beauty running through this vital and stirring tale of the Limberlost country in Indiana. The cast offers a wide range of characterizations, and the speech is especially suitable to the high schools of smaller towns.—Mary Ella Bovee.

Nor Long Remember, a one-act play, by Harold G. Hoffman. 7 m., extras. Royalty, \$5. The first scene is that of a group of men in a country store-post office offering adverse criticism of Lincoln's Gettysburg address soon after he gave it; the second is of Lincoln's delivery of the address. This is good historical material for high schools, providing Lincoln can be cast.

Janey's One Track Mind, a comedy in three acts, by Dorothy Bennett and Link Hannah. 6 m., 11 w. Royalty \$25. One living-room set. Eighteen-year-old Janey Browne, who prides herself upon her one-track mind, has come to live with her married brother. Three weeks of job-hunting convince her that the quest is hopeless, so she decides to marry wealth. She meets Martin Richardson, a wealthy young bachelor, and resolves to marry him if she can make him propose to her. Her brother ridicules the idea, and points out that Martin is accustomed to glamor girls. Janey hears of a famous teacher of "glamor," and joins the class in order to make herself more attractive. Meantime, she meets a boy of her own age, Stuart Hunter, who has inherited a small farm, and is trying to make a success of the rabbit-raising business. Stuart is smitten with her, but she tries to ignore him. The glamor course completed, Janey succeeds beyond her wildest dreams. Her success as a glamor girl almost frightens her. When a crisis in Stuart's life suddenly arises, she dashes to his rescue and realizes that Stuart

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is the one she loves. The play should not be difficult to cast from a senior group, and it should appeal to both high school and adult audiences. All situations are plausible. The rising action continues up to the last two minutes.—*Carl Cummings.*

The Dramatic Publishing Co., 59 East Van Buren St., Chicago, Ill.

Poor Dear Edgar, a comedy in three acts, by William Davidson. 5 m., 7 w. Royalty minimum \$10. One interior set. Gentle, naive Edgar Applethwaite, senior at Presfield College, is appointed chairman of a committee to secure Millman's first-rate orchestra for the college dance. Instead, by mistake, he hires Skillman's third-rate, three-piece orchestra, and the dance is a success—played up in all the picture magazines. He is expelled from college and on the same day buys a controlling interest in the college stocks. He wins the one-and-only girl away from the college football hero who patronizes him. He dates a much publicized diving girl, whom the other boys would give their eye-teeth to meet. Without any financial resources, he always makes money. Always seemingly helpless—almost stupid—he always proves himself more capable than his classmates. Constantly self-effacing, he bursts into the limelight. Edgar has audience appeal, college or otherwise. The supporting characters have well-defined personalities. The situations and lines are constantly laugh-provoking.—*Carl Cummings.*

Eldridge Entertainment House, Inc., Franklin, Ohio.

High School Minstrelsy is a book containing two minstrel first parts by E. H. Slaybaugh. The first parts can be easily produced, with but few rehearsals, by the high school cast. It is written for four to eight endmen, and extra material for endmen and interlocutor is provided. No royalty.—*Carl Cummings.*

Goodnight, Uncle George, a farce in three acts, by Betty Roberts. 7 m., 8 w. No royalty for first two performances. One living-room set. The Allens' problem child, Junior, suspects that he will not pass his exam in school. He and his pals plan to hold a cram session in the garage after his parents go to bed. That evening, an old friend of the family arrives unexpectedly, and, of necessity, must sleep with Junior. This upsets Junior's plans. In vain Junior and his friends try to drive the man from the house so that they may hold the cram session. After repeated attempts to make him go to a hotel, the boys learn that he is to be the new principal. They now lean over backwards trying to be nice to him. The next day Junior passes his examinations, and learns that the man is not the new principal after all. Suitable for junior high school.—*Carl Cummings.*

Row, Peterson & Co., Evanston, Ill.

Joe's Boys, a three-act play, by Alma Johnson. 6 m., 9 w. Royalty upon application. This is a dramatization of the Louisa May Alcott story, showing the life at Plumfield after the "little men" are grown up. The boys all return to Plumfield to further their romantic fortunes, and all turns out well. The play should make pleasant entertainment if given period costumes and setting.—*Donald Woods.*

Walter H. Baker Co., 178 Tremont Street, Boston, Mass.

The Cheers of Yesterday, a play for 8 women, in three acts, by Gladys Black Wilcox. This is a good play for women's clubs and possibly for a change in a high school dramatic program. Harriet Saunders' most treasured possession is an old play written by her late husband, and in which they both acted for many years. Pressed for money, she plans to sell it to the movies, even though she knows it will be burlesqued. In this way the daughter of an old friend is able to go to South America and marry a young engineer. The general tone of pathos and sacrifice is broken occasionally by the humorous scenes of Olivia La Reese.

PLAYS

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She wears outlandish costumes and cannot forget that she is "of the theater."—*Mary F. Temple.*

The Little Madcap, a farce in three acts, by Henry Rowland. 4 m., 6 w. Royalty, \$10. A humor leaning toward the slapstick pervades this farce, which needs perfect timing for a good production. Dolly Sevier gets caught in a bad situation when she pretends to the police the man they are hunting in her room is her secretly-married new husband. Roy, her very jealous real husband, then arrives, as also does man-hating Aunt Prudence, who has forbidden her to marry, and her strict music-teacher chaperone, who disapproves of Roy. Many mistaken identities make things very involved and comical.—*Virginia Leeper.*

Banner Play Bureau, Inc., 111 Ellis St., San Francisco, Calif.

Who is Petrikoff?, a comedy in one act, by Ralph Birchard. 2 m., 5 w. No royalty. Kay doesn't like Tom's interest in sports, so she invents a question game that will reveal his lack of cultural knowledge. When the other youngsters use the game to turn the tables

The Northwestern Press, Minneapolis, Minn.

The Circus is Coming to Town, a comedy in three acts, by Ray Hodges. 6 m., 8 w. Royalty 15% of gross income. Letitia Culbertson's pretended background of culture and Pilgrim ancestry has influenced the people of Centertown to select her to entertain a town visitor of great importance. Her brother-in-law, Lou, who supports her from his circus income, arrives at the same time with part of his circus people, to stay until his finances improve. Letitia's supposed family disgrace is surprisingly disproved when the townspeople reorganize Lou's circus as a community enterprise, asking Letitia to be the star performer as she was in her younger days. A play of interesting entertainment, with a great deal of possible fun in the roles of the circus people.—*Virginia Leeper.*

Ivan Bloom Hardin Co., 3806 Cottage Grove Avenue, Des Moines, Iowa.

Getting Papa's Goat, a humorous reading, by Ellis Parker Butler. Mamie and her mama bedevil papa to get a new car, but he compromises by trying to fix up the old one himself, with resulting catastrophe, which keeps the audience roaring with laughter. Eleven minutes.

Pattern of Life, a dramatic reading by Josephine Bacon. Man who caused war dies, and is forced to live through the horror that he brought about. A powerful, inspiring theme, intense dialogue. Characters, 2 men. Twelve minutes.

Lady Windermere's Party, a humorous reading from Oscar Wilde's play. This is the amusing scene in which the Duchess and her daughter Agatha maneuver to obtain a matrimonial from Mr. Hopper. Characters, 2 w., 1 m. Ten minutes.

Bride's Tears, a humorous reading by Enid Griffis. The young bride's emotions run from delight to bitter tears. Winner in the South Dakota state high school declamatory contest. Ten minutes.

The Cornhusk Doll, a dramatic reading, arranged from the play of the same title by Dora Mary Macdonald. Many times a winner in play contests, this is equally strong as a reading. Characters, 2 m., 2 w. Twelve minutes.

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Miss Eupha Bonham, Director of Dramatics at Bennington High School, Bennington, Vermont. Article in *Players Magazine*, March, 1939.

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Our Periodicals in Review

REVIEWED BY LOTTA JUNE MILLER

Articles reviewed in this department are selected for their practical value to drama teachers and students. These reviews will have achieved their purpose if they instill a desire among our readers to maintain an active acquaintance with the periodicals.

A JUNIOR COLLEGE THEATER. By Harlen Martin Adams. *Progressive Education* for January, 1940. In addition to giving the floor plan for the Menlo Junior College's new theater, several workable plans for presenting plays previous to its erection are explained.

When it was necessary to have more than one set for a play, an improvised outdoor theater was devised with the gymnasium for a background and the swimming pool for a sounding board. *The Night of January 16th* was effectively staged on an open platform within the gymnasium. This article may suggest to you means by which you can turn your handicaps into assets.

KILLING TWO OR THREE BIRDS WITH ONE STONE—An experiment in playwriting. By Dorothy Dondore. *College English* for March, 1940. Teachers and students of playwriting will find valuable information for expanding their courses of study. In keeping with the trend, the author has made some successful experiments in transposing play scripts into radio dialogue. This has been affected by substituting lines for pantomime. In this way, she is doubtlessly fitting some of her students for a practical and remunerative vocation.

PARADER. *American* for April, 1940. The old tramping spirit is still alive. Helen Morgan of Cleveland, Ohio, veteran of many little theater productions, has now her own company and is touring the country in a trailer. She is doing her part to bring back the depression-starved road by giving her one night stands of *Sun Up*, *The First Year*, and *Dracula*.

THE WHITE HOPE GETS PALER. By George Jean Nathan. *Newsweek* for March 4, 1940. *Night Music* has just sung the death knell for Clifford Odets, according to Mr. Nathan. The once "White Hope of Broadway" has slid like many of his contemporaries to the commonplace. His criticism of his play is: "It talks too much at the wrong time, and it suggests, as certain of his other plays have, a man volubly and indignantly waiting for an ideational street car that never shows up."

HOW I STAND IT. By Joseph Wood Krutch. *Nation* for February 10, 1940. Here is an answer you can give your high-browed friends who extol the novel to the detriment of the drama. Mr. Krutch, who has reviewed plays for the *Nation* since 1924, claims that, almost without exception, the new shows for each year have excelled the new novels. Their skill, workmanship, and artistry have been definitely superior.

HOLLYWOOD BOUND. *Time* for March 11, 1940. Hear ye, ye budding young playwrights. If you can write a "hit" for Broadway, you can almost name your figure when selling to the motion pictures. The *American Way* sold last year for \$250,000 plus royalties. Rumor has it that *Life With Father* has already turned down \$300,000.

A SHAKESPEARE TOUR IN WARTIME. By Rosalinde Fuller. *Theatre Arts* for March, 1940. Miss Fuller gives a descriptive account of the English theater during the war. While the streets are dark and the audience is in street clothes, once inside, the atmosphere is much as it used to be. Shakespeare still holds sway despite the fears in the hearts of the spectators.

But now certain lines from *Hamlet*, *Julius Caesar*, and *The Merchant of Venice* take on a new significance.

PLAY CONTESTS OR FESTIVALS. By Monroe Lippman. *Players Magazine* for March, 1940. Since this is the season for play contests and festivals, many Thespians will be interested in the discussion of the two forms. The author believes that the festival idea is superior to the contest because it adheres more closely to the spirit of the theater. "Moliere," he said, "did not write plays to prove he was a better playwright than Shakespeare, nor did Edwin Booth act to prove his superiority over David Garrick." He does not see any legitimate reason for competition between play producing groups.

CRITIC GEORGE JEAN WRITES A NEW ENCYCLOPEDIA OF BROADWAY. *Life* for March 11, 1940. Since you have been reading the caustic reviews of Mr. Nathan both in *Newsweek* and *Esquire*, you will find this pictorial account of his activities of interest. His latest accomplishment is the publishing of his 24th book, called *Encyclopedia of the Theatre*.

PAUL MUNI. My Morton Eustis. *Theatre Arts* for March, 1940. Mr. Eustis gives us an informative history as well as interview with Paul Muni. One of the startling points he sets forth is that Mr. Muni has never read any kind of a book on acting. His knowledge has all been gained through actual playing, first in a Yiddish Stock Company and later on Broadway.

When discussing the process of acting, he was at first inarticulate. Finally he made this statement: "If I were to use a principle at all in acting, it would be that if the mind—the basic generator—functions alertly and sums up its impulses and conclusions to a correct result, it is possible for the actor to achieve something creative."

All Thespians who are interested in acting should make it a point to read this article very carefully, giving special attention to those points regarding technique, the mind, and the emotions.

THEATER STILL MOST IMPORTANT ENTERTAINMENT ITEM, SAYS MISS HELBURN. By John D. Beaufort. *Christian Science Monitor* for March 1, 1940. This interview with Miss Helburn, veteran producer of the New York Theater Guild, will prove most encouraging to those fearing the death of the theater. Its salvation, she believes, lies in "novelty of form and greatness of conception, treatment or language." She also advocates the endowment of the theater by wealthy persons, similar to the practice used by artists and musicians.

LOS PASTORES. By Marcus Bach. *Theatre Arts Monthly* for April, 1940. This article describes the production of the age-old drama, *Los Pastores* (The Shepherds), as given by the Indians, Mexicans and Anglos in the region of Santa Fe, New Mexico. The play is given each Christmas season, with the moonlit mountains of New Mexico as the background. The play tells the story of the shepherds who, watching their flocks, hear the angel's song and decide to go to Bethlehem. New interest to the story is added by the appearance of the Devil and Michael, the archangel. You will find this a most interesting discussion.

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